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Wordsworth's Indebtedness to Akenside, Beattie and Cowper and A Theory of Energy in "The Prelude"

by

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Dissertation submitted to the Board of University Studies of the Johns Hopkins University in Conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Baltimore

June [illegible]

Wordsworth and Akenside

The species of literary historical investigation which has been developing within recent years does not aim to reduce the transcendent gift of genius to an indeterminable medley of inherited instincts and tendencies. To be sure, very definite and satisfactory results have been gained from the painstaking, and, at times, painful efforts of literary scientists to trace back to its genesis the first indication of life for the great Romantic movement in English literature; but no discovery of sources will ever replace the recognition which must be paid to the original contribution of a great mind that has coördinated and readjusted all its inheritance of the past. A just estimate of the tradition with which a great artist works deprives him not a whit of the honor due him; it does, however, in a century of seeming disintegration, help powerfully to establish the unity of thought for all ages.

The directions which literary investigators have taken in their attempts to locate the first flushes of romantic expression have been numerous. The growing expression of a consciousness of mere sense impressions, as they are

revealed in the poetry, landscape gardening, painting, travels and fiction of the eighteenth century has been studied by ~~Miss Reynolds, Beers, and Phelps.~~ These sense perceptions are the material into which Wordsworth breathed the breath of his high spirituality, and taught us to look with sublime reverence upon the handiwork of God, and to await an increasing interpenetration of the physical and psychical. Other investigations, of a ~~philological~~ nature, such as the compilation of concordances, will exhibit the growth of a vocabulary embodying the Romantic tendencies. The philosophy of Romanticism, because of the fact that the movement is distinguished chiefly by individuality of thinking, it seems impossible ever to formulate into a system. It extends, among those writers who are genuinely romantic in spirit, from the coarseness of Byronic materialism, through the transcendental realism of Wordsworth, to the shadowy idealism of Shelley.

Among the commonly recognized precursors of Wordsworth are Thomson, Cowper, and Beattie. I wish to present, as a very powerful influence in moulding the genius of Wordsworth, the work of a writer hitherto, for his Romantic traits, insufficiently recognized -- Mark Akenside

Because of his close associations with the coterie of Pope and Johnson, AKenside is generally grouped, even in the mind of the literary historian, with the Classical school, and slight allowance is made for his Romantic tendencies. A careful comparison will show that he has very close affiliations with Wordsworth. Before giving a resumé of the events of his life, his philosophic system, and his poetry, a review of the leading criticisms passed upon him and his chief work, "The Pleasures of the Imagination," will ~~be in order.~~

Courthope[1] says: "The austere course of imaginative reflexion seems to anticipate the style of Wordsworth's Excursion, and lies midway between the florid Latinism of Thomson and the avoidance of "poetic diction" characteristic of the Lake poet."

Beers[2], in quoting, remarks: "Lowell says that the very title of AKenside's poem pointed 'away from the beaten highway of commonplace to mountain paths and less domestic prospects. The poem was stiff and unwilling, but in its loins lay the seed of nobler births. Without it, the

1. History of English Poetry. Vol. V. p. 320.
2. English Romanticism. XVIII Century. pp. 139, 140.

"Lines Written at Tintern Abbey" might never have been."

"One cannot read 'The Pleasures of Imagination' without becoming sensible that the writer was possessed of poetic feeling, and feeling of a kind that we generally agree to call romantic. His doctrine at least, if not his practice, was in harmony with the fresh impulse which was coming into English poetry. - - - - -

"But Akenside is too abstract. In place of images, he presents the reader with dissertations."

Dr. Johnson[3] pounded out his hammer-strokes with this remark: "To his versification, justice requires that praise should not be denied. In the general fabrication of his lines he is perhaps superior to any other writer of blank verse; his flow is smooth, and his pauses are musical, but the concatenation of his verses is commonly too long-continued, and the full close does not occur with sufficient frequency. The sense is carried on through a long intermixture of complicated clauses, and, as nothing is distinguished, nothing is remembered."

3. Chalmers English Poets, XIV. p. 55.

Hazlitt,[4] besides calling him the "classical predecessor" of Wordsworth, says: "Akenside had in him the materials of poetry, but he was hardly a great poet. He improved his 'Pleasures of the Imagination' in subsequent editions, by pruning away a great many redundancies of style and ornament."

Disraeli,[5]: "Akenside's mind and manner were of a fine, romantic cast."

The most detailed statement of the value of Akenside's work is to be found in Myra Reynolds' dissertation.[6] Her study, by reason of the limitations of her subject, does not trace out his relations to Wordsworth, although her extracts from "Pleasures of the Imagination" are all given as indications of a pre-Wordsworthian spirit. "All the forms of the external world are but visible expressions of such thoughts of God as the mind of man is fitted to receive. The soundness of this interpretation of Nature is not here in question. We are merely concerned with the fact that in the middle of the century we find a statement of poetical creed which, so

4. Lectures on English Poets, Third Edition. London, 1841. p. 232.
5. Calamities of Authors, Vol. II, p. 2.
6. The Treatment of Nature in English Poetry Between Pope and Wordsworth. Chicago. 1909. Pp. 123 127

far as the thought is concerned, might come from 'The Excursion' or 'The Prelude.' Akenside is one of the first of the poets of the age to insist on the beauty of all nature, and to show an abiding sense of the spiritual elements that give significance to the external forms of Nature. He was also the first one to emphasize the Platonic doctrine of the identity of truth and beauty."

A German scholar,[7] in a recent monograph, has given a bit of very direct evidence concerning the influence of Akenside upon Wordsworth. In his catalogue of Wordsworth's books, Lieneman gives four places in the poet's works referring to Akenside, and appends this significant note: "Pleasures of Imagination I Ausg. mit vielen Anmerkungen Ws (Cat.)" This seems to bring to light another author whom Wordsworth carefully studied, and adds to the cumulative evidence now being gathered against the popular notion that his genius was native and cultured only ~~by the~~ through contact with nature ~~soul~~. The Prelude alone, - especially Books III, and V, - proves conclusively that Wordsworth read both widely and intensively. What may be the content of these 'many notes,' in the absence of the

7 Die Belesenheit von William Wordsworth, von Dr. K. Lieneman, Berlin. 1908. P. 85.

volume, we are unable to see, but the fact of the annotation itself serves to show that Akenside had found a congenial reader.

It is impossible to appreciate how very close a connection exists between these two poets without a knowledge of Akenside's life. It may be assumed that Wordsworth was familiar with these details of the early poet's course of living, and it is of importance to notice that many turns in Akenside's life may be paralleled in Wordsworth's career. The latter was modeling his life on that of his predecessor, and to Akenside is due a debt of recognition for his share in the splendid outburst of poetic genius.

Life.

Mark Akenside was born at New Castle-upon-Tyne, November 9, 1721. He was the son of a butcher whose humble life was a source of unhappiness to the sensitive pride of the poet. Paralleling Wordsworth's earliest exercises, "Dear native regions, I foretell", and "Calm is all Nature as a resting wheel," Akenside, at the same early age of sixteen, showed his genius and love of poetry in producing two poems while at school: "The Virtuoso, in imitation of Spenser's style and stanza", and "The Poet, a Rhapsody."

In his boyhood, he visited relatives farther north at Morpeth, where the charming delights of the surrounding country fixed themselves upon his mind; and here he is credited with having started his great poem, "The Pleasures of the Imagination". Wordsworth's school-days at Hawkshead were no less the basis of his greatest work, and his entire life [illegible].

After a preliminary education at Newcastle, Akenside was sent to Edinburgh to prepare for the ministry, the profession which Wordsworth thought seriously of choosing. Akenside was given aid through a Dissenters' society, but in a year he decided to study medicine, and returned the money which had been lent him. As a medical student, he was considered somewhat dull, with which we may compare Wordsworth's indifference to the prescribed studies at Cambridge; but he was especially noted for his eloquence in debate and his fund of classical learning. The possibilities of doing some broad, sweeping work aroused his ambition for a seat in Parliament; Wordsworth, we know, had high hopes of becoming a regenerator of the French people. Akenside returned to Newcastle in 1741, and three years later went to London to publish "The Pleasures of the Imagination" for which Dodsley, on the recommendation of Pope, gave him a munificent sum of £120.

His first visit to the continent was in 1744, when he enrolled at the University of Leyden. He is reported to have mastered all the requirements in one month, and on 16th. of May, 1744, he took his degree of Doctor of Physic. His return to England was marked by the publication of a volume of poetry, including "Hymn to the Naiads" and "Ode to Earl of Huntingdon" called by Dyce, his biographer, "perhaps the most perfect of all his efforts in lyric poetry." At this point in his career, Akenside was enabled to devote himself more to the theory than to the practice of his profession, through an annuity from a wealthy patron, Mr. Jeremiah Dyson. Wordsworth was similarly sustained, in his desire to become a poet, through a legacy of £100 from Raisley Calvert.

The young surgeon, well known as a poet and a wit, was by no means left without further honors. In 1753, by mandamus, he received the doctor's degree at Cambridge, and was elected Fellow of the Royal Society. He was a frequent lecturer at the College of Physicians, having delivered the Gulstonian and Harverean lectures upon important medical topics. For the Cronian lectures, 1756, he selected the subject of the "Revival of Learning", but after three lectures, dropped it entirely. In 1766 he prepared

Harvey's works for the press. His death, at the early age of forty-nine, occured June 23, 1770, two months after Wordsworth was born. His friend Dyson edited his poems in 1772.

This man of great precocity and early fame had some peculiar resemblances to the great poet. Akenside was fundamentally classical in his work, as is shown most ~~strongly~~ in his wealth of information on all topics, Especially Greek and Latin literatures, in his love for the minutiae of science, and in the marked dignity of his bearing. But it is very worthy of note, that, according to his biographer, Akenside had little taste for humor, the chief deficiency in Wordsworth's mental equipment. Moreover, Akenside "was gifted with a memory of extraordinary power, and perfect readiness in the application of its stores. With the exception of Ben Jonson, Milton, and Gray, it would be difficult to name an English poet, whose scholarship was of a higher order than Akenside's".[8] Wordsworth's remarkable memory, sometimes disregarded in an estimate of his genius, was the foundation of his unique theory of poetic composition.

8. Dyce: Life of Akenside. p. 103.

The judgment which is reported that Akenside's mind was rapid and precocious, rather than original, to such an extent early expectations of his success in medicine and literature were not realized, finds an analogy in the common belief that Wordsworth's mind, far greater, of course in its originality, hardened much in his later years. In both men this change was accompanied by an arrogancy of spirit. Akenside, in the coffee-houses, manifested a high degree of egotism, and, moreover, was accused of cruelty to patients and contempt for servants at Christ's Hospital. Wordsworth was never in favor with his peasant-folk; and was frequently at odds with his cultured friends. To Akenside is also attributed a marked pomp and stiffness of manner.

In 1761, at the age of forty, this distinguished surgeon, up to that time a Whig, well-known for his zeal in behalf of liberty, was appointed physician to the Queen, and forthwith became an ardent Tory. Whatever may have been the convictions supporting this change of politics, his biographers do not record. To suffer for the integrity of one's opinion was no common virtue in eighteenth century England. Wordsworth's lamented change, near the age of thirty, from radicalism to conservatism, was rooted deep in the bitterness of his experience. With his ex-

associates, Coleridge and Southey, Wordsworth felt no longer able to maintain his high theories for a regeneration of society. In the mellowing light of another century, we do well not to judge harshly those whose affections could not withstand the horrors of an expected national conflict.

Akenside is credited with much critical acumen, and it is said he was a most unprejudiced and candid judge of contemporary poets; of genuine value, indeed, was he to his age, if he approached, in that capacity, the genius of Wordsworth, whose estimate of the poetry of Coleridge, Byron, and Scott becomes recognized as eminently true as the years pass on.

The very evident variations in the external circumstances of these two men forbid pressing these comparisons any further; these few similarities in mental equipment and character here pointed out only exemplify the biological law in the realm of genius that Nature occasionally repeats herself. Here is the mind that most nearly approaches Wordsworth. Akenside had within himself, in his early life and writings, the promise of a notable Romanticist, but like most of those who exhibited even a tendency toward such a development, he was speedily mastered and moulded by the spirit of his age.

The Pleasures of the Imagination

"The Pleasures of the Imagination", in its prevailing tone, belongs to the school of Pope. A German scholar[9] has cited the passages from Shaftesbury's "Characteristics" and Addison's "Spectator," - with their ultimate dependence on Lucretius, - which Akenside used in his ~~philosophical~~ explanation of Nature and the mind of man. The poem is a worthy and dignified, but rather laborious tribute to the philosophy of the Deists. God as the great Artificer, this world as the best of his creations, and the littleness of man's earthly destinies, with the dangerous approach to pessimism which such a doctrine inculcates, — these are all the products of the cold intellect which came near to robbing English poetry of its emotional element.

But, although eighteenth century literature crowded its pages with reflections on man and society, the "Pleasures of the Imagination" is not a poem on manners. What Pope and Addison had taken as the accepted basis for their lighter essay work, came to the front for defense in Akenside's poem. The nature of his subject compelled him to deal with first principles. Nor is the blank verse which he employs his only other variation from traditional classicism. Even if we accept

9 Otto Brandt: Akenside's Leben und Werke. Leipzig Dissertation. Halle. 1897.

at this point the view that such blank verse is little more than unrimed couplets, with the monotonous fall of the cesura, there are numerous passages, as later citations will show, which are closely modelled on the full flowing, rounded periods of Milton and Wordsworth.[2] But Akenside's affinity with the latter is to be sought rather in special passages of a transcendental realism which reveal themselves as stray, glinting threads in the dull grey of its classic warp and woof.

Analysis of the Poem.

Book I.

In his "Design" Akenside proposes, for his first point, to distinguish the Imagination from all other faculties. The mystical union between Nature and the mind or "hearts" of men, — in what way effected we shall later determine, — the theme sung with such tremendous power by Wordsworth in the "Prelude" is boldly announced in the opening lines; and the comparison of the two beginnings of P. & I. from the respective editions, 1744, and 1757, shows the addition of a distinctly Wordsworthian feature, — how the mind may assimilate the sensuous experiences of the eye for nobler results.

"With what attractive charms this goodly frame
Of Nature touches the consenting hearts
Of mortal men; and what the pleasing stores
Which beauteous Imitation thence derives
To deck the poet's or the painter's toil, —
My verse unfolds."

— Pleasures

1744. P. of I. — ll. 1-6.

"With what enchantment Nature's goodly scene
Attracts the sense of mortals: how the mind
For its own eye doth objects nobler still
Prepare; how men by various lessons learn
To judge of Beauty's praise; what raptures fill
The breast with fancy's native arts endow'd,
And what true culture guides it to renown;
My verse unfolds."

1757. P. of I. ll. 1-8.

"An auxiliar light
Came from my mind, which on the setting sun
Bestowed new splendor; the melodious birds,
The fluttering breezes, fountains that run on
Murmuring so sweetly in themselves, obeyed
A like dominion, and the midnight storm
Grew darker in the presence of my eye:
Hence my obeisance, my devotion hence,
And hence my transport."

— Prelude II, 368-376.

Hitherto, says Akenside, the other attributes — Fancy, Fiction, Harmony, Truth, Liberty, — had been honored by the Muse,

"yet still unsung
Lay this prime subject, though importing most
A poet's fame."

P. of I. 32-34.

And it is Akenside's real claim for recognition that he should have proclaimed that

"Nature's kindling breath
Must fire the chosen genius; Nature's hand
Must string his nerves, and imp his eagle-wings
Impatient of the painful step, to soar
High as the summit; there to breathe at large
Aethereal air; with bards and sages old,
Immortal sons of praise."

P. of I., I, 37-43.

We now come upon a very daring flight in the poet's thought, a struggling consciousness of the break from all tradition, a new interpretation of the origin and development of poetic genius. From none of his contemporaries could he have taken such inspiration, nor indeed, from the rich and genuine classicism of his great models, — Virgil and Horace. These lines are a short prelude in themselves to that great body of poetic material

with which the romantic nature poetry of the nineteenth century has enriched the human mind.

"But the love
Of Nature and the Muses bids explore,
Through secret paths erewhile untrod by man,
The fair poetic region, to detect
Untasted springs, to drink inspiring draughts,
And shade my temples with unfading flowers
Cull'd from the laureate vale's profound recess,
Where never poet gain'd a wreath before."

Prof. L. L. 48-55.

"But not alike to every mortal eye
Is this great scene unveil'd." 79, 80.

Nature has fashioned each man for a separate task; but on the summit of a very mountain of transfiguration stand those who share in that spirit of "self-dedication" which shaped the life of Wordsworth:

"But some to higher hopes
Were destin'd; some within a finer mould
She wrought, and temper'd with a purer flame.
To these the Sire Omnipotent unfolds
The world's harmonious volume, there to read
The transcript of Himself. On every part
They trace the bright impressions of his hand:
In earth or air, the meadow's purple stores
The moon's mild radiance, or the virgin's form

Blooming with rosy smiles, they see portray'd
That uncreated beauty, which delights
The Mind supreme. They also feel her charms,
Enamor'd; they partake the eternal joy."
P. of I. I. 96-108.

The spirit of this passage tends toward orthodoxy. There is, however, a prospect of the later neo-Pantheism to be noted in "the transcript of Himself." This is comprehending God not so much by the intellect through laws of order, as by the emotions through the pure sensuous beauty of meadow, moon, and maid. "Her charms" are those of Nature (l. 82); and exalted on this pinnacle of beauty, these finer spirits partake of that "eternal joy" reserved for the mystics whose raptures transport them beyond the realm of human expression. That which Akenside predicated of a class, in a manner thoroughly typical of the classicists, Wordsworth individualized in the "Prelude." A few extracts from the latter will show how fond he was of referring to his experience:

"In Nature's presence stood, as now I stand,
A sensitive being, a creative soul."
Prelude XII, 206-7.

"Of single spirits that catch the flame from Heaven."
IX, 368.

"it shall be my pride
That I have dared to tread this holy ground,
Speaking - no dream, but things oracular;
Matters not lightly to be heard by those
Who to the letter of the outward promise
Do read the invisible soul."

XIII, 251 - 256.

Akenside's evening methodical classification of the pleasures of the imagination which result from the contemplation of greatness, novelty and beauty, is not reproduced in any separate section of Wordsworth's work; they are however, none the less recognized in the large body of minor poetry which he constructed. Akenside, as Bunat has pointed out, was here making close use of Addison's essays on the same subject. It is, in brief, a corollary of the ontological argument of the Deists that the real objective existence of God is necessarily involved in the existence of the very idea of God. Man's aspirations in the presence of the mighty works of Nature are a certain index to the eternal home whither he is going:

"The high-born soul
Disdains to rest her heaven-aspiring wing
Beneath its native quarry."

P. of I. I, 183-185.

Le St. Augustine : "Fecisti nos ad Te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in Te."

recall Wordsworth's lines on his entrancing experience at Chartreuse:

"I was lost;
Halted without an effort to break through;
But to my conscious soul I now can say -
'I recognize thy glory;' in such strength
Of usurpation, when the light of sense
Goes out, but with a flash that has revealed
The invisible world, doth greatness make abode,
There harbors; whether we be young or old,
Our destiny, our being's heart and home,
Is with infinitude, and only there;
With hope it is, hope that can never die,
Effort and expectation, and desire,
And something evermore about to be."

- Prelude VI, 596-608.

In discussing the pleasures excited by the qualities of the novel, Aikenside gives expression to the possibility of enjoyment which Wordsworth saw in the synthetic power of the Imagination. Obviously, the title of the poem we are examining will bring to the front the differentiation which Wordsworth made between Fancy and Imagination in numerous passages in the Prelude and Excursion, in the Prefaces, and in the classification of a large number of his poems. One of his most succint attempts to define his position on this

question is contained in the Preface, 1815–1845.
He objects to Taylor's definition of imagination as "the faculty which images within the mind the phenomena of sensation," a mere copying in idea the impressions of sense; he objects likewise to fancy as the power of 'evoking and combining, connecting or associating, at pleasure' those internal images. Let us examine here the poet's own statement:[10] "It is not easy to find out how imagination, thus explained, differs from distinct remembrance of images; or fancy from quick and vivid recollection of them: each is nothing more than a mode of memory. If the two words bear the above meaning and no other, what term is left to designate that faculty of which the Poet is 'all compact'; he whose eye glances from earth to heaven, whose spiritual attributes body forth what his pen is prompt in turning to shape; or what is left to characterize Fancy, as insinuating herself into the heart of objects with creative activity? Imagination, in the sense of the word as giving title to a class of the following Poems, has no reference to images that are merely a faithful copy; existing in the mind, of absent external objects;

10. Wordsworth's Prefaces and Essays on Poetry, Ed. by A. J. George, p. 46 ff

but it is a word of higher import, denoting operations of the mind upon those objects and processes of creation or of composition, governed by certain fixed laws. I proceed to illustrate my meaning by instances." His three examples:

"a fleet descried hangs in the clouds,"
"Over his own, sweet voice the Stock-dove broods"
"His voice was buried among trees"

show clearly that Wordsworth meant a power which, in one form, at least, manifests itself in the production of "figurative" language. Wordsworth, however, has nobler tasks to assign to this great power:

"This Spiritual Love acts not nor can exist
Without Imagination, which, in truth,
Is but another name for absolute power
And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
And Reason in her most exalted mood."

- Prelude XIV, 188-192.

This broad work of the Imagination traces out undiscovered forms and relationships, links together what the separate senses are tempted to separate, lays under cultivation for the nourishing of the soul large tracts of an unexplored country. To return, then, to Akenside's lines on pleasures of imagination which arise from the contemplation of what is novel, we have

no uncertain foreshadowing of Wordsworth's thought in this passage:

"Call now to mind what high capacious powers
Lie folded up in man; how far beyond
The praise of mortals may the eternal growth
Of Nature to perfection half divine
Expand the blooming soul?"

P. of I. I, 222-226

A Kenside dwells, in this section, on "the sprightly joy when aught unknown strikes the quick sense, and wakes each active power to brisker measures." This is mere sense perception and fancy, and against this novelty of externalities, Wordsworth, the seer, lays bare his lofty insight into the unrecognized relationship of familiar objects.

The third principle - Beauty, is treated with an ardent classicist's devotion to the golden age of Greek mythology; the treatment of the subject has few indications of original thought. Here, at lines 372-376, occurs the passage nearest akin to Platonism:

"Thus was Beauty sent from heaven,
The lovely mistress of Truth and Good
In this dark world; for Truth and Good are one,
And Beauty dwells in them, and they in her,
With like participation"

In tracing the rise of Beauty, Akenside finds it first in color; secondly

"Where Truth's eternal measures mark the bound
Of circle, cube, or sphere,"

thirdly, in a combination of color and form, as in the pearl and shell; fourthly, in fruit and flower and tree. Lastly comes the beauty of the human, spiritualized body.

"Thus doth Beauty dwell
There most conspicuous, even in outward shape,
Where dawns the high expression of a mind;
By steps conducting our enraptured search
To that eternal origin, whose power,
Through all the unbounded symmetry of things,
Like rays effulging from the parent sun,
This endless mixture of her charms diffused.
Mind, mind alone, (bear witness earth and heaven!)
The living fountains in itself contains
Of beauteous and sublime:"

P. of P. I. 473-483.

Akenside is here thoroughly in accord with the spirit of philosophic reasoning in his day. It is certainly significant that in this catalogue of the manifestations of Beauty he made no ~~mention whatever~~ of animal life; one searches in vain through the School of Pope for any indication of sympathy with the lower creatures.

For such a feeling one must turn to Cowper and Burns. Now, after all due and worthy tribute has been paid to Nature's charms, (an expression which I think Wordsworth seldom employs.), is there, asks the Deist, anything to thrill us so,

"as when Brutus rose
Refulgent from the stroke of Caesar's fate,"

or, "is aught so fair - - - as virtuous friendship?" Human emotion and passion rise infinitely in the scale, because of moral Beauty, above external creation. It was never Wordsworth's aim to decry the supremacy of Mind, but with a mental activity which attempted to reconcile idealism and transcendental realism, he emphasized the high value of a "wise passiveness" toward Nature. One line in Akenside gave Wordsworth the clue to the gap which existed in the declaying literature of the eighteenth century:

"For what are all
The forms which brute, unconscious matter wears,
Greatness of bulk, or symmetry of parts?
Not reaching to the heart, soon feeble grows
The superficial impulse; dull their charms,
And satiate soon, and pall the languid eye."

- P. of J. L. 526-531.

The power and happiness to be gained from Nature are most clearly and strongly presented

by Wordsworth in the two following passages of the "Prelude":

"Attention springs,
And comprehensiveness and memory flow,
From early converse with the works of God
Among all regions; chiefly where appear
Most obviously simplicity and power."
Book VII. 740 - 744.

"From Nature doth emotion come, and moods
Of calmness equally are Nature's gift:
This is her glory; these two attributes
Are sister Powers that constitute her strength.
Hence Genius, born to thrive by interchange
Of pleasure and excitation, finds in her
His best and purest friend; from her receives
That energy by which he seeks the truth,
From her that happy stillness of the mind
Which fits him to receive it when unsought."
- Book XIII, 1-10.

Man's moral sense,- his ability to discriminate between good and evil, justice and injustice, temperance and folly, is a rather cold and naked virtue. The poet therefor invokes "Imagination's rays",- with Akenside only a synonym for Fancy's power,- that the ingenuous youth may be fired by the exempla of history, appealing through the rolls of memory to ancient honor,

to guard inviolate the sacred Laws.

The conclusion of this book is an impassioned appeal to Freedom, - "Genius of ancient Greece!" that the poet may have power to unlock the springs of wisdom.

"for aboon the flight
Of Fancy's plume aspiring -."

Here Fancy is made a subordinate power, and Freedom, joined "with the immortal praise of Nature" is to tutor him in genuine patriotism. Formal and traditional as these closing lines appear to be, there is a similarity in spirit to the real humility and conscious dignity of power which Wordsworth frequently exhibits.

In the second edition of Book I, which appeared in 1757, Novelty is left out as a primary source of the Pleasures of the Imagination, and is placed among the incidental circumstances which only increase it. Two of the changes in the text are so suffused with the Wordsworthian spirit that we must take note of them. Both of them definitely attribute to Nature a healing and enlightening power:

"Lo, how the western sun
O'er fields and floods, o'er every living soul,
Diffuseth glad repose!"

352 - 354.

"Corporeal things
The mind of man impel with various powers,
And various features to his eye disclose.
The powers which move his sense with instant joy,
The features which attract his heart to love,
He marks, combines, reposits."

623 - 628.

Book II.

With a truer instinct than he was perhaps conscious of, Akenside placed his finger on the weakest spot in the literature of his day when, in the argument preceding the second book, he wrote: "The separation of the works of imagination from philosophy, the cause of their abuse among the moderns."

The book opens with a brief review of the "barbarous" Middle Ages, and of the domination of the "tender arts" by priest and craft. The magic torch, having been almost extinguished as it was passed from the hands of Petrarch, Dante, Boccaccio, Tasso, now, under the favoring gale of public liberty in Albion, shall be fanned

into a flaming fire. Akenside falls in most readily with the conciliatory manner of Pope, whom he has lauded in his "Design" as "the most perfect of modern poets, in the following:

"already had we dared
To pierce divine Philosophy's retreats,
And teach the Muse her lore; already strove
Their long-divided honours to unite,
While tempering this deep argument we sang
Of Truth and Beauty"

P. of I. II, 62-67.

Akenside possessed neither the historical conspectus nor the intuitional acumen to analyze the tendency of his day. That broad stream of imagination and vital philosophy, mirroring in its depths all human life, which we attribute to Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton, was now divided into two shallow rivers; philosophy was a matter of dry reason and cold intellect, poetry was fanciful, capricious, amusing. Both were in danger of being lost in the dry beds of dogmatism and skepticism. But through fidelity to his own observations and convictions, we have these occasional lines which show that Akenside, beneath the conventionality of his age, was touched by the breath of real poetry. Beginning at line 67, he delineates, in addition to

the pleasures excited by the great, the novel, and the beautiful, already enumerated in Book I, the various sources of adventitious pleasure, and in so doing, uses a metaphor which, with singular propriety, might be applied to the delight with which the newly rising School could have hailed the first flush of the Romantic dawn:

"Fair the face of Spring,
When rural songs and odours wake the morn,
To every eye; but how much more to his
Round whom the bed of sickness long diffus'd
Its melancholy gloom! how doubly fair,
When first with fresh-born vigour he inhales
The balmy breeze, and feels the blessed sun
Warm at his bosom, from the springs of life
Chasing oppressin damps and languid pain!"

P. of J. II, 58-96.

It is doubtful if Akenside has proved his point, in lines 97-120, where he claims that a knowledge of the laws of Science by which the rainbow is produced gave him greater enjoyment than beholding its beauty. This would surely place him in the company of the great mathematicians, and was always referred to by Wordsworth as an auxiliary joy. We recall, in this connection, Keats' horror at such

literary vivisection. This doctrine of the Deists lays too great emphasis on Knowledge & Science, and fails to recognize that this is only subordinate to gaining a control over environment.

After a somewhat weak presentation of the teleological argument, which shows the pleasure resulting from our comprehension of the "aim" of all Wisdom, the artful contrivance and disposal of the varying parts of creation, Akenside illuminates very finely that soul-stirring experience of the patient investigator, when by "the Lamp of Science" he has revealed the "secret honours" of Nature. Perhaps it is some new Knowledge of the laws of light, or of the planets, or of the bounteous yielding earth which helps him "scan the counsels of their Author's hand." All of this is commonplace enough in the literature of the century. But this attempt to see behind the outward show of visible things stirs all the depths of passion; and the poet recognizes the emptiness of much of Opinion, and the flaccidness of current expression, speaking in a new way of "the veil spun from the cobweb fashion of the times to hide the feeling heart." We are now in touch with the Spirit and message of the greater part, and in the lines which conclude this selection there is a sudden grasping

of the thought which has been undercurrent all the while, combined with a simplicity and dignity of diction such as would cause the ardent Wordsworthian to treasure them up with the "touchstones" of the master:

"Then Nature speaks
Her genuine language, and the words of men,
Big with the very motion of their souls,
Declare with what accumulated force,
The impetuous nerve of passion urges on
The native weight and energy of things.
Yet more: her honours where nor Beauty claims,
Nor shows of good the thirsty sense allure,
From passion's power alone our nature holds
Essential pleasure."

P. of S. II. 149-158

Beside this let us place Wordsworth's arraignment of decaying classicism and poetic diction:

"In fine
I was a better judge of thoughts than words,
Misled in estimating words, not only
By common inexperience of youth,
But by the trade in classic niceties,
The dangerous craft of culling term and phrase
From languages that want the living voice
To carry meaning to the natural heart;

To tell us what is passion, what is truth,
What reason, what simplicity and sense."
— Prelude VI, 105-114

Akenside had taken a bold step in declaring the supremacy of passion in life, for it is incumbent upon him to prove, in a manner far removed from that of his dilettante contemporaries, that sorrow and fear and indignation have their legitimate share in the development of man's soul. This is introduced by the speech of Harmodious, the teacher of the poet's early age. There is a distinct likeness in a few of his lines to the conclusion of the proposed first book of "The Recluse," where Wordsworth, in a sublime but sanctified self-consciousness, shows us the plan of the great structure he left unfinished:

"What time pale Autumn shades the silent eve,
Musing I roved. Of good and evil much,
And much of mortal man my thought revolv'd."
P. of S. II. 190-192.

"On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life,
Musing in solitude, I oft perceive
Fair trains of imagery before me rise,
Accompanied by feelings of delight
Pure, or with no unpleasing Sadness mixed;
And I am conscious of affecting thoughts
And dear remembrances, whose presence soothes

Or elevates the Mind, intent to weigh
The good and evil of our mortal state.
— To these emotions, whencesoever they come,
Whether from breath of outward circumstance,
Or from the Soul — an impulse to herself —
I would give utterance in numerous verse.
Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love and Hope,
And melancholy Fear subdued by Faith;
Of blessed consolations in distress;
Of moral strength, and intellectual Power;
* Of joy — in widest commonalty spread;
Of the individual Mind that keeps her own
Inviolate retirement, subject there
To Conscience only, and the law supreme
Of that Intelligence which governs all —
I sing: — "fit audience let me find though few."
— Recluse."

* The beauty of this line is indeed almost matched by A Kenside:

"the passions, gently soothed away,
Sink to divine repose, and love and joy
Alone are waking; love and joy, serene
As suns that dawn the summer."

1744. P. of I. Bk. I, 129 - 132.

11. Wordsworth's Poetical Works. Edited by Dowden. Vol. VI. p. 5.

Harmodius laments, in the stilted elegaic style of the later Graveyard School, the early death of his beloved Parthenia, hardly to be interpreted as a reference to a personal loss, ~~on Akenside's part~~, an opinion which one of his critics has expressed.[12] The remainder of the book deals with an allegorical vision ~~which the poet has~~. The machinery that is here manufactured for several Kaleidoscopic changes is so fragile that the reader loses all sense of genuineness and reality of purpose. The scheme of this vision may be borrowed from the conclusion of Leibniz's "Theodicée."

Emerging above a purple cloud, first appears "Genius of human Kind." The mission of this heavenly visitor is to teach the "child of mortal birth" how futile are our little complainings against the Great Ruler and his invariable Laws; to convince him as well of the softening effect of Sorrow. Vistas change with startling rapidity; verdant meadows give way to raging torrents before the eyes of the poet; and the reader acknowledges the artificiality of what Akenside anticipated in his design when he states that the poem demands a "figured style." With this prospect of "sable cliffs"

12. On the Life, Writings, and Genius of Akenside, with some Account of his Friends. By Charles Bucke. London 1832.

"shaggy forest", "glittering stream" before him, the poet must give heed to the teleological argument, best summed up in these lines: the "Sovereign Spirit of the world":

"So fixed the dates of being, so disposed
To every living soul of every kind
The field of motion and the hour of rest,
That all conspired to his supreme design,
To universal good."

– Pro. I. Bk. II, 329-333.

The graduated order in the species of creation leads the poet into a passage closely approaching Platonism, although he tells us in his notes on this book, that the idea is not found directly stated in the Greek philosopher.

"So all things which have life aspire to God,
The sun of being, boundless, unimpaired,
Centre of Souls!"

Bk. II, 356-358.

The 'Genius' recalls how, in the early days of the world's history, man enjoyed the Earthly Paradise; and the poet is permitted to behold a smiling youth, attended by

"The goddess from whose inspiration flows
The toil of patriots, the delight of friends"

and her gay companion, the fair Euphrosyne.

one of the three, Graces presiding over the banquet, the dance, and all social enjoyments. Because the youth bestows all his ardent glances upon the younger and fairer divinity, she is withdrawn from the 'enamell'd green' and in her stead comes fiery Nemesis. Just as the fiend is about to leap upon his prey; - the smiling youth; - the elder goddess intervenes, saves him from his doom, and interprets the meaning of his experience. The constant heart must refuse the "silken fetters of delicious ease; nor yet is it to fear the rage of merciless Fate. The final words of the Goddess rise to an eminence as high as that of Wordsworth's intense idealism:

"while thus inur'd
By watchful danger, by unceasing toil,
The immortal mind, superior to Fate,
Amid the outrage of external things,
Firm as the solid base of this great world,
Rests on his own foundations."

— P. of L. II. 585 - 591.

Thus enlightened, the youth pleads for the return of Euphrosyne, and the short section which narrates her reappearance is Miltonic in its epic touch; this suggestion is strengthened by the use of an epithet effectively used by Milton and Wordsworth, though disregarded by other poets:

"He spoke; when instant through the sable glooms
With which that furious presence had involv'd
The ambient air, a flood of radiance came—
Swift as the lightning flash; the melting clouds
Flew diverse, and, amid the blue serene,
Euphrosyne appear'd. With sprightly step
The nymph alighted on the irriguous lawn,
And to her wondering audience thus began":
Pop. I. II. 636-643.

The vision soon closes, and 'Genius', in a didactic passage of some length (100 lines), expatiates upon the reconciliation between Virtue and Pleasure which every mortal must effect. Passion in all its manifestations, — the lover's grief beside the urn of one he loved, the pity of the crowd as it watches from a neighboring cliff a shipwrecked bark, the stifled hope of some noble, patriotic youth when ambitious tyrants rule the land, — these are all "heart-ennobling" sorrows, which shall culture the heart of man.

The second book ~~suffered~~ many changes in the revised form of 1765. Truth is considered in its three classes, - matter of fact, experimental or scientific truth, and universal truth. Virtue receives most attention, although the allegory of the two goddesses is dropped. Ridicule, which forms a main division of the 1744 edition of the third book, is here treated in a much condensed form. We cannot say whether or not Wordsworth ever saw this 1765 edition, but it contains several passages that look like mile-stones in the progress of his genius.

In advancing from the consideration of Beauty (close of Book I. 1757 edition) to that of Truth, the poet approaches his theme with an evident seriousness of purpose which can hardly be paralleled elsewhere during the century. It is similar to Milton's avowed 'high-calling', and is certainly to be treated as one of the plainest manifestations of a pre-Wordsworthian spirit. The change from the general to the specific, from the class of men to the individual, has frequently been cited as a Romantic trait; but it is well to note that this full and frank confession of preparation for a poetic task, and this impassioned appeal for the endowment of the poetic gift, which has hitherto

seemed the distinguishing mark of Wordsworth,
is here preluded in Akenside, so as to give us
the germ of another literary form or tradition.

"The ambitious mind,
With objects boundless as her own desires,
Can there converse; by these unfolding forms
Touched and awakened still, with eager act
She bends each nerve, and meditates with pleased
Her gifts, her godlike fortune. Such the scenes
Now opening round us. May the destined verse
Maintain its equal tenor, though in tracts
Obscure and arduous! May the Source of light
All-present, all-sufficient, guide our steps
Through every maze! and whom in childish years
From the loud throng, the beaten paths of wealth
And power, thou didst apart send forth to speak
In tuneful words concerning highest things,
Him still do thou, O Father, at those hours
Of pensive freedom, when the human soul
Shuts out the rumor of the world, him still
Touch thou with secret lessons: call thou back
Each erring thought; and let the yielding strains
From this full bosom, like a welcome rill
Spontaneous from its healthy fountain, flow!"

1765 -- Pleas. I. Bk II. 21-41

Individual passages from the "Prelude" need not be introduced for comparisons; scores of them may be adduced. Akenside's mind fed upon the moral species and powers of Passion and Thought, while Wordsworth's converse was with the 'speaking-face of Nature'; but the unique points of similarity are first, the avowed sense of humility, and inability to cope with his theme; second the necessity for the retirement of a poetically sensitive soul from the distractions of a busy life for inspiration.

Cf. The Prelude, Book I. 237,-249, 146-166.
, Book II, 69-77.

Book III.

Both Akenside and Wordsworth were striving for a philosophy of practical living. The divergence in the totality of their respective messages lies in this: The former labored for a restoration of an ideal of classical beauty, though he was not altogether untouched by a pedantic aloofness; while the latter recognized the eternal values of the passions and strove to purify them, through a presentation of the "simple, sensuous, and passionate." A few passages of the intense interest which these two poets took in the study of humanity are worthy of collocation:

"What wonder, therefor, since the endearing ties
Of passion link the universal Kind
Of man so close, what wonder if to search
This common nature through the various change
Of sex and age and fortune, and the frame
Of each peculiar, draw the busy mind
With unresisted charms? The spacious west,
And all the teeming regions of the south,
Hold not a quarry, to the curious flight
Of knowledge, half so tempting or so fair,
As man to man."

P. of J. III, 1-11.

There is a flavor of literary borrowing from lines 7, 8, of the above in Wordsworth's "Recluse" fragment

in the searchings through limitless space:

"Not Chaos, not
The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scooped out
By help of dreams - can breed such fear and awe
As fall upon us often when we look
Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man -
My haunt, and the main region of my song."

"Recluse." 35-41.

A very large portion of this third Book, 1744, is devoted to the question of ridicule as a test of Truth, another of the doctrines which Akenside borrowed from Shaftesbury. Wordsworth at one time touches upon this subject, for his comprehensive power was so broad that he could see nothing humorous or ridiculous. Bache, in this essay (p. 41) remarks that "Akenside, I believe, was occasionally given to ridicule", an opinion which Dyson, throughout his memoir, does not sustain. Whether, because of the resentment from Warburton which the passage is said to have aroused, or because the author had discarded his view, Akenside reduced the passage in length, inserted it in the revised second book, and filled the gap with an uninteresting story of Solon.

His slight justification for the sense of ridicule is quite characteristic of the brilliancy and hardness of the Age of Manners:

"Wherefore, but to aid
The tardy steps of Reason, and at once
By this prompt impulse urge us to depress
The giddy aims of Folly."

P. of P. III. 262 265.

The seriousness of the youthful Alexander, and the meaning of the secret that he was attempting to fathom, induce the poet to discard the bits of color with which many of his "Enamels" are painted; in broad, masterful strokes he seizes upon the new hope for poetic genius, the great work for which he felt himself called:

"Such are the various aspects of the mind—
Some heavenly genius, whose unclouded thoughts
Attain that secret harmony which blends
The ethereal spirit with its mould of clay;
O! teach me to reveal the grateful charm
That searchless Nature o'er the sense of man
Diffuses, to behold, in lifeless things,
The inexpressive semblance of himself,
Of thought and passion."

— P. of P. III. 275 286.

Wordsworth's endeavors to construct his body of poetry on "emotion remembered in tranquility", have induced a recent writer[13] to give a more definite analysis of his purpose. He believes that Wordsworth used his subjective "childhood memories" or intuitions, as well as his later objective, modified "memories of childhood" for purely artistic purposes, and that he deliberately renounced pure mysticism because it left him no concrete experiences on which to base his poetic representations. Wordsworth's marvelously developed memory was, of course, founded on the psychological law of the power of association, which furnishes much inspiration to those who look for an exquisite joy above the sensuous. This spiritualizing power of memory is thus set forth by Alexander:

"For when the different images of things,
By chance combin'd, have struck the attentive soul
With deeper impulse, or connected long,
Have drawn her frequent eye; however distinct
The external scenes, yet oft the ideas gain
From that conjunction an eternal tie
And sympathy unbroken."

P. P. I. II. 12-31.

13. Wordsworth: A Study in Memory and Mysticism, by Solomon F. Gingerich. Elkhart, Indiana, 1908.

eloquent? [illegible]?

As we observed before, Akenside did not separate Fancy from imagination as Wordsworth did later; the labors of the "child of Fancy" in Book III are those of Wordsworth's creative imagination. The material out of which the work is fashioned consists of "plastic powers", "blind Emotions",

"and with loveliest frenzy caught,
From earth to heaven he rolls his daring eye,
From heaven to earth." He compares and blends the "Splendours of the eternal Realms", divides, enlarges, and extenuates.

The poet is quick to recognize the "disdainful eye" of "Some cold fastidious judge" who "calls my toil, and calls the love and beauty which I sing, the dream of Folly." Akenside gives a ~~Splendid~~ defense of this power of the inner vision, common to all transcendentalists, and blooming ~~hardiest~~ in Wordsworth's mind. This is the secret of the 'eternal harmony' which breaks forth spontaneously so often in Wordsworth's work.

"From thee wise be far
Such gross unhallow'd pride; nor needs my Song
Descend so low; but rather now unfold,
By what mysterious fabric of the mind,
The deep-felt joys and harmonies of Sound
Result from airy motion; and from Shape
The lovely phantoms of sublime and fair.

By what fine ties hath God connected things
When present in the mind, which in themselves
Have no connection?"

Prof. I. III. 454 464.

These lines seem to emphasize the fact that the ideal representations of the mind must be derived from real objects presented to the senses, whatever may be the common basis of mind and matter. Wordsworth's best exposition of this idea may again be taken from "The Recluse."

"while my voice proclaims
How exquisitely the individual Mind
(And the progressive powers perhaps no less
Of the whole species) to the external World
Is fitted: — and how exquisitely, too —
Theme this but little heard of among men —
The external World is fitted to the Mind;
And the creation (by no lower name
Can it be called) which they with blended might
Accomplish: — this is our high argument."

As he approaches the climax and conclusion of his work, Akenside, not without some pain, seems to shed the garment of poetic diction which often has obscured his genuine feeling. His strokes are filled with a vital energy; they produce no sense of a dallying, cloying ease; we listen breathless as

he speaks. The impassioned soul, aflame with the enchantment of Nature, -

"bends his ear
To the full choir of water, air and earth;
Nor heeds the pleasing error of his thought,
Nor doubts the painted green or azure arch
Nor questions more the music's mingling sounds,
Than space or motion or eternal time,
So sweet he feels their influence to attract
The fixed soul, to brighten the dim gloom
Of care, and make the destined road of life
Delightful to his feet."

P. of J. III, 498-507.

There follows a discussion on the intuitive nature of Taste, setting forth also the varieties of natural forms as they appeal to different types of mankind. Akenside's scientific training had not prepared him to touch upon the most question of the respective values of environment and heredity in the formation of Taste.

In the closing passage of the book, Akenside enlarges again on the harmonious power of Nature upon the "attentive mind", a theme which we have seen developing throughout the work. It is novel in the dominion which it grants to the minutest influences of Nature. The first half the passage (568-598) is

couched in the tiring glitter of pseudo-classical epithet: -- "the Spring distils her dews, and from the silken pen its lucid tears unfolds"; "the hand of Autumn tinges every pendent branch with blooming gold"; "each passing hour sheds tribute from her wings". But when he leaves these brilliant enamels which any scribbler in a London coffee-house might have done equally as well, -- when he turns to the wilder aspects of the landscape, the charms of which Thomson took upon himself to introduce into English poetry; -- Akenside, significantly enough, does not write solely with his eye on the object, but turns into a meditative strain as sublime as many passages in Wordsworth. We must note, it is true, that "the barbarous growth of ignorance and rapine" it was the province of Pope, and not of Wordsworth to combat; but the message of the grander elements, in the chastening of the passions, is clothed again with such choice simplicity as will recall Wordsworth in his loftiest moments:

"Not a breeze
Flies o'er the meadow, not a cloud imbibes
The setting sun's effulgence, not a strain
From all the tenants of the warbling shade
Ascends, but where his bosom can partake
Fresh pleasure, unreprov'd. Nor thence partakes
Fresh pleasure only; for the attentive mind
By this harmonious action on her powers,
Becomes herself harmonious: wont so oft
In outward things to meditate the charm
Of sacred order, soon she seeks at home
To find a kindred order, to exert
Within herself this elegance of love
This fair-inspired delight; her temper'd powers
Refine at length, and every passion wears
A chaster, milder, more attractive mien.
But if to ampler prospects, if to gaze
On Nature's form, where, negligent of all
These lesser graces, she assumes the port
Of that Eternal Majesty that weigh'd
The world's foundations, if to these the mind
Exalts her daring eye; then mightier far
Will be the change, and nobler. Would the forms
Of servile custom cramp her generous powers?
Would sordid policies, the barbarous growth
Of ignorance and rapine, bow her down
To tame pursuits, to indolence and fear?

Lo! she appeals to Nature, to the winds
And rolling waves, the sun's unwearied course,
The elements and seasons: all declare
For what the Eternal Maker has ordain'd
The powers of man: we feel within ourselves
His energy divine; he tells the heart,
He meant, he made us to behold and love
What he beholds and loves, the general orb
Of life and being; to be great like him,
Beneficent and active. Thus the men
Whom Nature's works can charm, with God himself
Hold converse; grow familiar, day by day,
With his conceptions, act upon his plan,
And form to his the relish of their souls."

P. of J. III, 573 - 633.

Book IV.

Very little of that mystical spirit which struggles to express Man's relation to God through Nature may be discovered in any of Akenside's minor poems; however, the dim but strengthening assurance of "unrecognized modes of being" is acknowledged in the concluding lines of his Ode "On Lyrical Poetry" (1745), one year after he had finished his Romantic masterpiece:

"Nor Theban voice nor Lesbian lyre
From thee, O Muse, do I require,
While my presaging mind
Conscious of powers she never knew,
Astonish'd grasps at things beyond her view,
Nor by another's fate submits to be confin'd."

Dyce, in his memoir, p. 86, in explanation of these lines, says that Akenside was contemplating an heroic epic, on the subject, "Timoleon."

In the revised form of "The Pleasures of the Imagination," the books are dated as follows: Book I, 1757; Book II, 1765; Book III, 1770. The revised third book consists entirely, with the exception of the first thirty-nine lines, of a long classical story of the patriot Solon. The content and language of the story are far removed from any Wordsworthian connection, but let us note that this change removes the strongest connecting links between the two poets, — their

passionate interest in humanity, the value of the memory, and constructive work of the imagination. But this change was made in the same year in which the fragment, Book IV, was added, and judging from the ideas presented in this incomplete book, Akenside was preparing for a complete Romantic confession of the development of his own genius. The mystical spirit then, as we shall see, was not deserting him in his advancing years. As the revised third book is, in its narrative, surely objective, so is the fourth book in its lyricism, strongly subjective. The invocation "O my adventurous song!" foreshadows a depth of personal feeling which is sustained by the entire fragment. Although these lines may have been composed before 1770, and have remained in ms. until that year, they were surely not a part of the original poem of 1744, or they would certainly have appeared at that time. But there was coming into being a new theme for literature, — tracing the haunts of youthful genius; increasing reverence, almost adoration, for the wild and terrible aspects of Nature on which the Mind feeds. If Akenside made no recantation of his earlier beliefs and unusual moods; we have here genuine "emotion remembered in tranquility." The next most complete exposition of this theme was a work

~~which we shall later discuss~~: Beattie's "Minstrel", begun in 1766; finished in 1771. Again we have no documentary evidence that Wordsworth ever saw these lines; but, in the grouping of phrases, even more than in the ideas developed, there is such marked similarity that one can entertain little doubt that Wordsworth knew this book.

"A different task remains: the secret paths
Of early genius to explore; to trace
These haunts where Fancy, her predestined sons,
Like to the demigods of old, doth nurse
Remote from eyes profane. Ye happy souls
Who now her tender discipline obey,
Where dwell ye? What wild river's brink at eve
Imprint your steps? What solemn groves at noon
Use ye to visit, often breaking forth
In rapture 'mid your dilatory walk,
Or musing, as in slumber, on the green?
—Would I again were with you! — O ye dales
Of Tyne, and ye most ancient woodlands; where
Oft as the giant flood obliquely strides,
And his banks open, and his lawns extend,
Stops short the pleased traveller to view,
Presiding o'er the scene, some rustic tower
Founded by Norman or by Saxon hands:
O ye Northumbrian shades, which overlook
The rocky pavement and the mossy falls

O solitary Wensbeck's limpid stream;
How gladly I recall your well-known seats
Beloved of old, and that delightful time
When all alone, for many a summer's day,
I wandered through your calm recesses, led
In silence by some powerful hand unseen!"

P. of. I. IV. 20. - 45.

Such were the boyhood raptures of Wordsworth, as he details his experience so fully in the first two books of the "Prelude." The following single example of a direct appeal to rock and stream concludes the account of a joyous ride by Wordsworth and a party of boys through the old Furness Abbey in the Vale of Nightshade, founded by Stephen in 1127; a more concrete study of Akenside's "some rustic tower, Founded by Norman or by Saxon hands":

"Oh, ye rocks and streams,
And that still spirit shed from evening air!
Even in this joyous time I sometimes felt
Your presence, when with slackened step we breathed
Along the sides of the steep hills."

- Prelude II, 131-135.

By far the most effective lines in both poets occur where they express their sense of gratitude for the lessons which Nature had taught them; a chanting of reverent devotion to the handiwork

of God. For most men, human relationships are held in memory longest; but for these two poets, early intercourse with Nature was to furnish manna for their souls until mature manhood.

"Nor will I e'er forget you; nor shall e'er
The grave tasks of manhood, or the advice
Of riper wisdom, wean me to disclaim
Those studies which possess'd me in the dawn
Of life, and fix'd the colour of my mind
For every future year: whence even now
Your sleep I rescue the dear hours of morn,
And, while the world around lies overwhelm'd
In idle darkness, am alive to thoughts
Of honourable fame, of truth divine
Or moral, and of minds to virtue won
By the sweet magic of harmonious verse;
The themes which now expect us."

— T. of C. IV., 46 - 55.

The unorthodox character of the following lines from the "Prelude", so closely modelled on the tender affection expressed in those just quoted, doubtless influenced Wordsworth to keep his autobiographic poem unpublished until after his death. He knew the shock they would give to many a mind of his day, and feared they might nullify the power of his work. The 'sentiment of Being' which he believed to be spread

through all creation leads him to this climax:

"If this be error, and another faith
Find easier access to the pious mind,
Yet mine a grossly destitute of all
Those human sentiments that make this earth
So dear, if I should fail with grateful voice
To speak of you, ye mountains, and ye lakes
And sounding cataracts, ye mists and winds
That dwell among the hills where I was born.
If in my youth I have been pure in heart,
If, mingling with the world, I am content
With my own modest pleasures, and have lived
With God and Nature communing, removed
From little enmities and low desires,
The gift is yours; - - - - - - - -
- - - - - - - - - if, in this time
Of dereliction and dismay, I yet
Despair not of our nature, but retain
A more than Roman confidence, a faith
That fails not, in all sorrow my support,
The blessing of my life; the gift is yours,
Ye winds and sounding cataracts! 'tis yours,
Ye mountains! thine, O Nature! Thou hast fed
My lofty speculations; and in thee,
For this uneasy heart of ours, I find
A never-failing principle of joy
And purest passion." — Prelude II, 417-450.

Akenside's exaltation to "thoughts of honourable fame" is akin to Wordsworth's dedication, as he walked home in the early morning from a night of dancing:

"Oh! need I say, dear friend! that to the brim
My heart was full; I made no vows, but vows
Were then made for me; bond unknown to me
Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
A dedicated Spirit. On I walked
In thankfulness, in blessedness, which yet survives"

Prelude, IV, 333-338.

Akenside devotes the remainder of Book IV to those artists, who by instinct, training, and retirement from the busy stage of living are best fitted to call forth images of beauty, — musician, sculptor, painter:

"But the chief
Are poets; eloquent men, who dwell on earth
To clothe whatever the soul admires or loves
With language and with numbers. Hence to these
A field is op'ned wide as Nature's sphere;
Nay, wider; various as the sudden rise
Of human wit, and vast as the demands
Of human will."

P. of I. IV. 101-105

One cannot refrain from placing beside these lines those others so often quoted:

"Blessings be with them – and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares –
The Poets, who on Earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays!
Oh! might my name be numbered among theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days."

– Wordsworth, Personal Talk IV, 51-56.

Akenside and 'Poetic Diction'.

It has been noticeable throughout these quotations that, in those portions of his work where Akenside rises to bold flights, departing from the fetters of Poetic thought, he leaves below the stock of poetic pithets, and whether he indulges in real or insanuative descriptions, in reflection or eloquent appeal, the language becomes original and virile. Occasionally we come across a very homely word which startles us by its appearance in dignified poetry. Such is the opening passage of Book IV.

"One effort more, one cheerful rally more,
Our destin'd course will finish."

The estimate which Professor Raleigh in his book "Wordsworth" places upon the poet's real practice in his diction may help us to show the relationship which he bears to Akenside on this question. "The attempt to prove in the "Lyrical Ballads" "that there neither is, nor can be, any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition" was, as Coleridge and numerous later critics have shown, unsuccessful 'The prose order of words, so much more important than the prose choice of words' is frequently violated in these early poems. In these attempts he did not attain the easy, natural pro-

rhythm and idiom that distinguish many of the Seventeenth Century songs. The truth at the bottom of his theory which Wordsworth, in his mental isolation neglected, is rather to be expressed thus[14]: "He valued colloquial forms and phrases not as the chosen vehicle of sound sense and habitual feeling, but as the most sincere expression of deep and rare passion."

The seeming triviality of many - an object which Wordsworth allowed his mind to linger over for some high lesson is analogous to the bareness of the language which he oftimes selected, forgetful of its hackneyed or vulgar associations. The reverence which he felt for an idiot's life as being "hid with God" is lost to many a reader, and the connotation of the phrases which he employs in "Peter Bell" can never save the poem from ridicule.

Students of style must forever recognize the warfare which words carry on in their struggle for existence. Wordsworth, as Professor Raleigh points out: "was to find out later that his quarrel with the corruptions of language was a quarrel with language itself, and that when we do not speak the truth it is as often

14. Wordsworth, by Walter Raleigh, p. 93.

because they cannot as because they will not.

---- A confession of the inadequacy of language for the communication of the poet's thoughts and feelings interrupts the Prelude again and again."

Wordsworth had discovered very early in his poetic career that the language of his predecessors was hopelessly inadequate to express truth as he saw it; and in stepping from the word-entangled field of poetic diction to the bare moor of 'the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society' he came perilously near to sinking by the way. It was only through renewed communication with Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton, in a field of fragrant and selected flowers, that he was enabled to give us the exalted passages of the "Prelude" and "The Excursion," the immortal Ode, the Ode to Duty, "The Character of the Happy Warrior," and the finest of the sonnets. In these poems, as well as in the "Lines Written Above Tintern Abbey," overshadowing all the rest of it. "Lyrical Ballads," the calm and ever-increasing strength of Wordsworth's imagination demanded a medium of communication closer to Milton's epic style than to any other.

Akenside is the strongest connecting link in the eighteenth century between the two great poets. If the preceding analysis and quotations have served to show how closely Wordsworth assimilated Akenside's thought, on the birth and development of poetic genius, on the harmonizing power of the inner vision, and on the relation which Nature bears to God and man, they must serve as well to show, in the words of another of Akenside's critics[15]: "like Homer's gods his poetry speaks a different language from that of common mortals." It is where Akenside is engaged in description that he falls most readily into the jargon of his day, for there the temptation was greatest; but that he possessed originality of mind, and was artist enough to express himself simply, boldly, and chastely, cannot be doubted

15. The Pleasures of Imagination. By Mark Akenside, M.D. A new Edition, with Critical Essay on the poem, by Mrs. Barbauld. p. 32.

Wordsworth and Beattie.

James Beattie (1735-1803).

The value of an exemplar in the history of ex- ambitious mind compels us to review the life and leading work of Beattie, the poet philosopher, and essayist, in their relation to the development of Wordsworth's genius. Immensely popular because of his romantic poem, "The Minstrel" no less than for his defense of Deism and orthodox Christianity, "The Essay on Truth", he combined imagination with reason in a similar but far inferior degree to the most philosophic of English poets. This sketch is based on the work of Forbes[1] and Dyce.[2]

James Beattie, youngest of six children, was born October 25, 1735, at Laurencekirk, Kincardine, Scotland. His father died when the boy was only seven years of age. He was trained at the very reputable parish school of Laurencekirk, and was known among his school-fellows as the *poet*, sometimes rising during the night that he might commit to writing any poetical idea that his fancy had happened to suggest. Through the support of his elder brother David, he was sent in 1749 to Marischal College,

1. Forbes. Account of the Life and Writings of Beattie. Edinburgh 18[illegible]
2. Memoir of Beattie, by Rev. Alexander Dyce, in Reprint of Aldine Edition of Beattie's poems. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. Boston

Aberdeen, with which institution he was connected for many years as lecturer. Greek, philosophy and divinity figure conspicuously among his studies at college; his professor of Greek discovered his genius and encouraged it. He is reputed to have had no talent for mathematics, which may indicate the weakness of his later reasoning in philosophy.

He was graduated Master of Arts in 1753, and accepted a position as school-master and parish clerk at Fardoun, near his native town. Among the peasantry he found solitude and leisure, enjoyed himself in the composition of short poems, and cultivated diligently his love of music. He was charmed and inspired by the scenery of the neighborhood, particularly by a well-wooded glen communicating with the mountains, a spot where he often composed. We are told that, like Wordsworth, he would pass whole nights among the fields, gazing at the starry sky, and observing the various aspects it assumed until the return of day. At Fardoun, he also made the acquaintance of two gentlemen who became patrons for his later works, — [illegible] in Fardon, afterward Lord Gardenstone and Lord Monboddo.

In 1758, he was appointed usher of the grammar school at Aberdeen, and came once again

into the active society of his Alma Mater, and the pleasant companionship of many wits. In 1760, he was urged, much to his surprise, by Mr. Arbuthnot, a business man of taste and learning, to apply for a vacant chair at the college. Supported by Lord Milton and the Duke of Argyle, he was successful in obtaining the position. On October 8, 1760, at the age of twenty-five, Beattie was installed as Professor of Moral Philosophy and Logic in Marischal College, and for thirty years continued to lecture there. This sudden elevation helped to give him that popular place in the minds of the British public which he held throughout his life. Beattie kept an exact diary of his lectures, showing what was done in his class-room every day for thirty years; he not only lectured, but frequently questioned, to make sure that the young men had digested his doctrines. With the other professors at Marischal, — Dr. Skene, Dr. Campbell, Dr. Gerard, Dr. Stewart, and Rev. Dr. Farquhar, he became a member of a philosophical association called by the name the "Wise Club." The harmony among this group of thinkers was notable; they were united in their defense of virtue, religion, and truth against the skeptical tendencies of the day.

In 1761, he published his first volume "Original Poems and Translations", dedicated to the Earl of Errol

These early poems are of little worth, one is impressed since Beattie with their great imitation, so prevalent was the decaying Classicism of the time. Beattie used to destroy all copies of the volume — but he secured, and thought well of only four poems. In 1765 he printed "The Judgment of Paris" another classical failure. In the autumn of the same year, he wrote a flattering letter to Gray, then in the height of his fame. Gray had come to ~~visit~~ Scotland to visit the Earl of Strathmore at Glamis Castle. He invited Beattie to visit him, and this was the beginning of a life-long friendship between the two poets. A new and somewhat expurgated edition of his poems appeared in 1766. Three events now crowd together which are important in Beattie's biography. From a letter, dated September 22, 1766, we learn that he had begun his Spenserian imitation to be entitled "The Minstrel". On June 28, 1767, he married Miss Mary Dunn, a lady of pleasing person, lively manners, and a moderate share of accomplishments. Her later years, however, were marred by insanity of a very violent form, which, with other misfortunes, broke the poet's spirit. His projected poem was abandoned for the time, and he took up philosophical studies. He was especially desirous of exposing the absurdity of Hume's system.

"Our skeptics either believe the doctrines they publish, or they do not believe them; if they believe them, they are fools; if not, something worse."
In 1770, therefore, appeared his famous "Essay on Truth." Two of his friends, to whom he entrusted the manuscript for disposal, determined to publish it on their own account, and wrote him that it had been accepted for fifty guineas.

We may pass over the value of this and other of his philosophic works, for none of them occupy a place in the history of philosophy. He has generally been accused of writing with extreme partisan zeal, and of charging the skeptical philosophers of a deliberate attempt to falsify and misrepresent because they could not explain, by pure reason, the mysteries of orthodox faith.
"The loose, commonplace character of the professor's reasoning made the essay popular among such readers as wish to be thought acquainted with the philosophy of the day, while they have neither the ability nor inclination to grapple with metaphysical problems. Attacks on Hume in singularly bad taste abound throughout the book."[3]. In less than four years five large editions of the "Essay" were circulated, and it was translated into French,

3. Dictionary of National Biography, — Beattie.

German, Dutch and Italian. It gained for Scottie a substantial pension and the King's unbounded friendship, while its favorable reception urged him to set forth numerous smaller treatises in his later years.

Flushed with his second great success in life, he returned to his poetical project, and in 1771, the first book of "The Minstrel" appeared. It was given immediate recognition and praise, and went through four editions before the second book appeared in 1774. On the publication of the first Book, Gray declared it to be true poetry and inspiration; he ventured, however, to apply his file to what he considered "a few blemishes." In the autumn of 1771, for the benefit of his health, he paid his second visit to London, where he was hailed as the triumphant adversary of skepticism, and the rising poet of a new day. He made the acquaintance of Mrs. Montagu, Lord Lyttleton, Garrick and others; and of the latter he says: "The compliments he pays my writings are so high I have not the face to mention them." He returned to Aberdeen in December, but visited London again in 1773, when by way of a letter of introduction to Lord Dartmouth, he was presented to the Prime Minister, Lord North, and later to the King. Among other honors were his pension of £200, and the degree of Doctor of Laws from Oxford

His portrait was painted and presented to him by Reynolds. The constant use of abstractions by the classical school is well exemplified by this painting; Beattie with his Essay under his arm, is guarded by the angel of Truth, who pushes back three ominous looking figures, — Prejudice, Skepticism, and Folly.

Beattie declined the offer of a chair in moral philosophy at Edinburgh, as well as a living in the English Church. Bare mention must suffice for some of his later works. In 1776, "On Poetry and Music as they affect the Mind"; "On Laughter and Ludicrous Composition"; "On the Utility of Classical Learning"; a letter on the "Improvement of Psalmody in Scotland"; a paper on "Dreaming"; and, in 1783, his "Dissertations, Moral and Critical," a book which elicited much praise from Cowper. In 1786, he published "Evidences of Christian Religion", and in 1790 the first volume of his "Elements of Moral Science"; the second volume of the latter, in 1793, contained a strong attack on the slave trade.

His wife's insanity was so confirmed that she was removed from her family, and Beattie sought diversion in the company of his English friends, chief among whom was Dr. Porteus, Bishop of Chester, afterward Bishop of London. He was to be yet more unfortunate in his domestic life.

In 1790, his elder son, James Hay Beattie, died of fever after a short illness. The son had written many fragments of prose and verse which the father later published. In 1796, his second son, Montagu, the remaining hope and solace also died; and Beattie, overcome with grief, exclaimed "I have now done with the world." He suffered serious lapses of memory as a result of the blow, but continued to deliver occasional lectures until 1797. He grew quite corpulent in later years, and it is asserted that he was addicted to the excessive use of wine as an opiate to relieve the pressure on his mind. In April, 1799, he was struck by the palsy, and, after many intermittent attacks, died on August 18, 1803.

The Minstrel.

The poem, written in the Spenserian stanza is made up of two books, the first of sixty, the second of sixty-three stanzas. Its purpose is to trace the education of a poetic genius, first, through close and reverent intercourse with Nature, secondly, through the oral instruction of a Sage and all the customary methods of Culture. The interest of the reading public in this question was due to the influence of Percy's "Relques of Ancient English Poetry" That Beattie was seriously concerned with the life of one of these early bards, to any degree of historical accuracy, ~~no~~ one can believe. The remarkable inequality of the two books of the poem, the chasm between the first and second stages of Edwin's education indicate that Beattie, secure in his high professorial chair, was satisfying the blase literary taste of those who were amused, rather than moved, by the 'return to Nature' idea.

The brief sketch of his life, given above, indicates the germs of Romanticism in his nature; we can readily understand why they did not develop. The position of "The Minstrel" in the literature of its day, its dependence in thought and expression on Earlier writers, and its succeeding influence, has already been established[4]

4. Kurt Puschl: James Beattie's "Minstrel." Berlin Dissertation 1904

Analysis of the Poem. - Book I -

The first ten stanzas form an introduction, and discuss the conflict which many a soul must wage with Fortune, Envy, Poverty, in order to secure Fame. The hero of this poem shall seek only Health, Competence and Peace, and find these in

"the boundless store
Of charms which Nature to her votary yields."

A shepherd swain of the 'north Countrie', patient in toil, serene amidst alarms, married Thalx, whom he had loved since his childhood, and of their union was born Edwin, our hero. He was their only child; his only toy a pipe of rudest minstrelsy; and between his loud laugh and sad look, "Some deemed him wondrous wise, and some believ'd him mad." His delight was in the solitude of Nature; he possessed a deep affection for the lower animals; he was charmed with the sad and terrible aspects of waters, woods, and winds. He soon became well grounded in Beattie's religion, a hope of immortality gleaned from the resurrection of the flowers, and the argument of design in Nature. His sire would have him learn "no subtle nor superfluous lore"; charity and forgiveness towards all were enjoined upon him. Before the ambition for pleasure, wealth or power had come upon him, he was bidden to "indulge gay

hope, and Fancy's pleasing fire." Therefore did he dream of graves and ghosts and corses pale, and spend the nights with fairies, awaiting the joyous dawn of day. Beattie drops the narrator's point of view in stanzas XL to XLII, to celebrate his own high converse with Nature and her votaries, as well as to hurl his invective against the skeptics who spread their "filthy nets in Truth's fair face." Edwin's earliest knowledge of poetry came from the Beldame, as she recited the tales of halls and knights, of merry swains and nut-brown maids, of hags and fiends and spectres. Her piece de resistance was the famous ballad of "Babes in the Woods." The poet digresses on another philosophic theme:— the futility of rebelling against Providence, and the incongruity of judging the whole scheme of creation from our own little window. To Edwin, Nature gave strength and fire to soar on Fancy's wing above this vale of tears. This 'love enthusiast' in his solitary excursions, would roam the snowy waste at eve to view the changing forms of clouds, and wander along the shore to hear the noise of the waves. He refused to engage in the village dance, but song was his favorite pursuit. Gathering poetic material from the legends of the past, and scanning whatever in earth or sea or sky was beautiful or new, sublime or dreadful, his Muse attained a rarer culture.

Book II.

Time makes possible all changes: so Edwin, now advanced to young manhood, must leave his romantic dreams, and strengthen himself in the hardships of life.

"One evening, as he framed the careless rhyme," he came while wandering upon a rock-enclosed vale, wherein upon one cultivated spot there dwelt a Hermit. Unobserved, Edwin hearkened to his voice while, through twelve stanzas, the Sage poured forth his apostrophe to Innocence, Contemplation and Solitude, decrying at the same time Levity, Lust, Vanity and Ambition. He too had sought for glory in the paths of guile; but, though betrayed by the world, he returned unembittered; he only mourns "for virtue lost, and ruin'd man." Edwin did not interrupt the discourse, but turned back home, deeply troubled by what he had heard concerning the degradation of the human heart. One morning, at early dawn, he visited the Hermit's flowery nook to have his perplexities resolved. At first, the Sage would hide from him the dreadful truth:

"Be ignorance thy choice, where Knowledge leads to woe."
But virtue is the child of Liberty, and through the divine prerogative of free will man may attain to happiness and heaven. The old man requested Edwin to visit him often, that he might instruct him

more fully. Save for Plutarch's Lives, Edwin could find no inspiration in history, for

"To those whom Nature taught to think and feel,
Heroes, alas! are things of small concern." Edwin
gloried in the charms which Fancy has cast about the
Golden Age. The Hermit felt impelled to warn
him against the heights of joy and depths of woe
to which Fancy might lead him:

"the real ills of life
Claim the full vigour of a mind prepar'd,
Prepared for patient, long, laborious strife."

The historic Muse is adorned by Albion's Freedom.
Philosophy must next appear to curb Imagination's
lawless rage. Reason assists, and by such discipline
Edwin develops into a wise, mature man. Poesy, how-
ever, still claims the enthusiast's fond regard, and
from Nature's beauties he learns to frame its forms
of bright perfection. Finally, he came under the
sway of Virgil and Homer, and with a genuine
classic flourish, he

"clears th'ambiguous phrase, and lops th'unwieldy
line."

Tuschl has dissected "The Minstrel" so minutely in tracing back the themes which find expression in the poem that we may briefly summarize his three leading divisions

(a) The contradictory themes of the eighteenth century on the question of genius and poetic art are represented by Pope's demand for imitation of the ancients and Young's appeal for freedom of originality in "Letter on Original Composition." Between them stands Addison who calls for novelty in a poetic production. Beattie was the first to forsake abstract reasoning on the question, and present a concrete example, influenced doubtless by Rousseau in Emile, 1762. In Book I, Beattie was strongly influenced by Young: "genius struggled with madness." Edwin's poetry is elementary; he has no learning; Nature is his only teacher. In Book II, this education is succeeded by that of Culture. To Addison's art canon of the great, the novel, and the beautiful, Beattie added the "dreadful." This "Romantic shudder" of "pleasing dread" has its history in Thomson's "Winter" and Akenside's "Pleasures of Imagination"[5]. The romantic character of this aesthetic demand opposes the "dreadful" to the classical variety of elegance. Through intercourse with

5. See above, p.

Reynolds, Beattie imbibed his thought of a general idea of Beauty, which is above all the exact imitation of Nature; and thereafter, Edwin sought for an earnest, classical ideal of beauty.

(b.) The philosophy of the poem is Deistic, and largely a repetition of Pope and Thomson. Deism had rejected the authority of a personal God and fear of retribution in a future world; it therefore had to philosophize away the evil through the reign of Reason, Science, and Industry. Among Pope's ideas, taken from the "Essay on Man" and rehandled by Beattie are: (1) the incompleteness of man's view of the world, (2) the necessity of good and evil as complements of each other. The other side of Beattie's philosophy arises from his enmity to Hume and all the Skeptics. Society no longer thought of a positive Christianity; for God was substituted "the Eternal", "Heaven." Man is nominally good, and here Deism comes into conflict with the Church. Beattie championed two principles, for which his orthodoxy was assailed as late as 1807: (a) his belief in the inborn goodness of human nature, (b) his declaration that Christianity is not mysterious.

(c) The portrayal of Nature in "The Minstrel" is chiefly in the manner of Thomson. The traditional combinations of untrodden groves, foaming torrents, balmy gloom, and sluggish pools, indicate that Beattie was not given to first-hand expression. He was among the first to make literary use of Scotland's mountains, and in proclaiming his countrymen "a nation famed for song and beauty's charms", he becomes a forerunner of Burns and Scott. His native spot, Laurencekirk, is situated at the foot of the Grampian Hills, near the east coast of Scotland, where the rich scenery of the Lowlands passes into a dreary and wild mountain landscape. Unlike Gray and Goldsmith, Beattie did not place his character in the midst of Nature merely as an observer, nor like Thomson, as a sympathetic observer; but rather as one receiving the full play of Nature's forces in his own soul, to give them back to the reader in his purified emotions. Hence Edwin has those "mystic transports" that color so much of Wordsworth's poetry. In his cry "Away from town", Beattie was continuing the work of Cowper and Ferguson, and his expressed love of animals is a growth from Thomson, Goldsmith and Cowper. The longing for melancholy takes rise in Milton and Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy."

Tuschl, in considering the Hermit as a literary figure, finds three types. (1) the Spenserian Hermit, or magician; (2) the Ballad Hermit, fond of disguise; (3) the Renaissance Hermit, a true hermit in his love for solitude.

Beattie gives ample evidence of a genuine love for nature and some appreciation for its power; but the position of the poem in the history of nature poetry is not striking. The limitations of his work are thus express by Miss Reynolds.[6]

"There are almost no specific flowers, birds, or trees mentioned in all this abundant study of the external world. This use of the general instead of the specific is one element of an effect too often perceived, an indefiniteness of outline, a vague blurring of edges, the result of which is not mysterious suggestiveness but simply dimness and confusion. There is also an unexpected feebleness of vocabulary and lack of direct observation."

But the idea which he conceived, of explaining in verse, the development of a poetic genius is of inestimable value in understanding Wordsworth's relations to his predecessors. "The Prelude"

6. Page. 170.

is Wordsworth's highest achievement. It is no less his greatest production than "Paradise Lost" is that of Milton. That it has not gained the recognition which it deserves is due to the fact that during the forty-six years it lay in manuscript (1805-1850), Wordsworth put forth that amazing amount of material, a very large portion of which, while it deserves deep consideration as an exposition of his genius, by no means reaches the height which he attained in his autobiographical poem. In the popular mind, the name of Wordsworth is associated only with the "Excursion", the Immortality Ode, a few great sonnets and lyrics; and when such critics as Arnold, Hudson, and Raleigh — who would not dare rate him without a study of "The Prelude" — have coupled his name with Shakespeare and Milton, the general reader, marred perhaps by the garrulity of much of "The Excursion", submits to the judgment of his superiors, but not without a feeling that nature poetry is a field where the common man may not wander at ease.

There are many arguments to be deduced for considering "The Prelude" his masterpiece. His special mission in the development of English poetry he had exemplified in the "lyrical

Ballads" and defended in the Prefaces. His thought had become clarified and coupled balance with enthusiasm. After having been relieved of pressing want by Raisley Calvert's legacy in 1795, he enjoyed the flowering of Coleridge's subtle and sympathetic mind. He was beginning to feel a justification for his great renunciation, of which Dr. Moir, one of his critics, says,[7]:

"Never, perhaps, in the whole range of literary history, from Homer downwards, did any individual, throughout the course of a long life, dedicate himself to poetry with a devotion so pure, so perfect, and so uninterrupted as he did. It was not his amusement, his recreation, his mere pleasure. It was the main, the serious, the solemn business of his being. It was his morning, noon, and evening thought, the object of his out-door rambles, the subject of his in-door reflections; and, as an art, he studied it as severely as ever Canova did sculpture, or Michael Angelo painting."

We shall now attempt to show how very pervasive was the influence which the life and work of Beattie shed upon the life and work of Wordsworth. Verbal agree-

7. The Poetical Literature of the Past Half-Century, p. 65.

ments, such as for a few passages have already been indicated by Tuschl (pp. 66-73), may here count for much, because they establish the fact that oftimes the greatest influences are unrecognized or unacknowledged. Tuschl has, moreover, thrown out several suggestions for the study of ~~The~~ Beattie's Hermit as the prototype of the Wanderer and the Solitary, and of Edwin as the prototype of the 'Wordsworthian child'. We shall leave these for closer investigation. Our concern here is with "The Prelude" only, and such indications of Beattie's influence as we can gain from Wordsworth's earlier work.

The popularity of Beattie's poem was so great as to cause an ardent biographer to declare that if he was not the first poet of his day, he was of the first rank. This was synchronous with Wordsworth's boyhood, and must be recognized as directing, in part his nature experiences. The point to be observed is this: Wordsworth had been developing a keen intellect through an extraordinary contact with Nature; it had set him to thinking, not only of his life-work, but of the problems of existence as well. Beattie confessed in a letter to the Dowager Lady Forbes 12th October, 1772: "I find you are willing to suppose that, in Edwin,

I have given only a picture of myself, as I was in my younger days. I confess the supposition is not groundless. I have made him take pleasure in the scenes in which I took pleasure, and entertain sentiments similar to those of which, even in my early youth, I had repeated experience. The scenery of a mountainous country, the ocean, the sky, thoughtfulness and retirement, and sometimes melancholy objects and ideas, had charms in my eyes, even when I was a schoolboy; and at a time when I was so far from being able to express, that I did not understand my own feelings, or perceive the tendency of such pursuits and amusements." 8. The autobiographic touch of Beattie's hero had so stirred Wordsworth to emulation that we have the testimony of his sister Dorothy, in 1793, writing to Miss Pollard: "'In truth he was a wayward wight.' This verse of Beattie's 'Minstrel' always reminds me of him, and indeed the whole character of Edwin resembles much what William was, when I first knew him after leaving Halifax." 9. Another of Wordsworth's native environments strengthens the likeness. In his own words:

9. Thos. Knight, Wordsworth
8. Dyce's Memoir, p. XXXVII

"I remember my mother only in some few situations. — An intimate friend of hers told me that she once said to her, that the only one of her five children about whose future life she was anxious was William; and he, she said, would be remarkable, either for good or for evil. The cause of this was, that I was of a stiff, moody, and violent temper." 10.

At what age Wordsworth read the "Minstrel," and learned the biography of its author, we cannot say. Pascal has shown, p. 66, a slight indication of a literary borrowing from "The Minstrel" in Wordsworth's earliest poem, "Lines Written as a School Exercise at Hawkshead, at the age of 14."; the deeper obligation to be recognized lies in the dominant influence which this work of Beattie's must have had over Wordsworth, culminating in the form which he determined to give the first, or introductory part of his epic. It is unfortunate that we possess so little direct evidence of whatever constant use Wordsworth made of Beattie's work; at all events, we should perhaps not find such literal borrowing as might be the case with even Shakespeare or Tennyson, with their sources, but a little reasoning, at this

10. Wordsworth [English Men of Letters] by F. W. H. Meyers, p. 4.

point, from external facts, may help to confirm my thesis that to Beattie Wordsworth owed his greatest debt in planning "the Prelude."

The very opening lines of "The Minstrel" tell us that Edwin shall lack any aristocratic burning for Fame of the hour, and since Gray, Goldsmith and Crabbe had frequently and faultlessly expressed the high worth of the same sentiment, we know that Wordsworth had high company in his determination to sacrifice a worldly career. What greater exemplar, then, did Wordsworth need than him whose "pure, ethereal soul, in each fine sense is exquisitely keen, and his joy is in the charm which Nature to her votary yields."?

Wordsworth's brief confession in the "Preface to the Excursion," 1814, is to be placed beside his record in the "Prelude" of a search for a poetic theme, Book I, ll. 146-300. "Several years ago, when the Author retired to his native mountains, with the hope of being enabled to construct a literary work that might live, it was a reasonable thing that he should take a review of his own mind, and examine how far Nature and Education had qualified him for such employment. As subsidiary to this preparation, he undertook to record, in verse, the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them - - - - - and

the result of the investigation which gave rise to it was a determination to compose a philosophical poem, containing views of Man, Nature and Society; and to be entitled, The Recluse; as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement." [11]

But this decision came only after arduous self-questioning, for the poet felt that he lacked neither the vital soul, the power of generalization, nor the sharp outlines of detailed observation. The suggested themes were numerous, -- Milton's contemplated Arthurian epic, a Spenserian tale of triumphant virtue; the meaning of a universal Mythology; the eternal Youth of the Spirit of Liberty; all these were cast aside:

"My last and favorite aspiration, mounts
With yearning towards some philosophic Song
Of Truth that cherishes our daily life."
— Prelude I, 228-230.

Keats had likewise planned a "philosophical poem", and to the charge that, for further development it possessed too little action and too much reflection, he replied "The fault lies in the first conception," while Wordsworth, of his plan, says "The fault lies in the first conception"

11. E. Dowden: Wordsworth's Poetical Works. VI, p 4.

Whatever this slight verbal similarity may mean, we should note that both poets planned their work in three parts; the third book of "The Minstrel" was to put Edwin in a position to arouse his countrymen during an expected invasion; like the proposed third book of "The Recluse" it was never even attempted. Both poets did their work about the age of thirty; an early age, as Miss Reynolds points out, seemed the flowering time of most of the first great Romanticists.

In his vacation days at Cockermouth, after his work at Hawkshead, he could well imagine himself to be an Edwin. The influence of the "Minstrel" was not a passing sentimentalism, but strong enough to color his entire poetry. The very fact that Wordsworth repeats in "The Excursion" the themes, under a thin disguise, first presented in "The Prelude," shows how powerful was this influence, and the cause for the inferiority of the second effort. Like Edwin, Wordsworth came out of his romantic youth, passed through the critical age of reason, and strengthened himself for the struggle of life. Both returned to the service of poetry as an ideal. Wordsworth's whole career was a concrete example of what must be

bean Beattie's ideal, and like the young shepherd of a Classicist's fancy. the great Romantiest murmured at his verses on the hillside.

There is no such full expression of Wordsworthian themes in Beattie as we find in Akenside; the modes of expression are at wide divergence; other verbal similarities than those pointed out by Pusch may be discovered; the figure of the Solitary owes much to the Sage; the Wordsworthian child may trace its ancestry, in part, to Edwin; but the fact of high importance is this; that from a literary figure, this "dedicated spirit" received the impulses that helped to coordinate his mental fibre, and to furnish the seed for a great deal of our modern thought concerning mysticism

Wordsworth and Cowper.

No literary historian or critic has failed to point out the close intimate relationship which exists between the poetry of Cowper and that of Wordsworth. But it would be difficult to find a case where the problem of discovering a literary progenitor, -- with all discount given to the "deadly parallels" -- offers inducements so many and tempting, and speculations so subtle and dangerous. In the more externalities of their living no less than in the materials which they seized for poetic use, there is a similarity to be traced.

If it be true that the student of the evolution of literature is as yet no more certain of the rise of new species than is the worker in the field of science, if he has not yet determined the complementary value of environment to inheritance, must we not hold fast to the truth that the germ of every great social movement must be sought in the ideals of some heroic figure? Wordsworth and Cowper strove, the former consciously, the latter unconsciously, for a reformation of English verse. Let us not forget the part they bore in the reformation of the social life of England, an influence which has not spent its force even in our own day. And we must look for the source

of this latter reformation in the character of the two ~~poets~~, men, and feel the striking identity between their gentle, contemplative natures, nurtured by an intense, but quiet enthusiasm.

Back of all that Professor Goldwin Smith has to say of Cowper in his biography of the poet in the English Men of Letters Series, one feels that the ~~very~~ broad chasm between the ideals of poet and biographer has given us a very unsympathetic and somewhat superficial and flippant presentation. It is ~~very~~ pleasing, therefor, to turn to the shorter, but keener analysis of his life made by Miss Alice Law, in the Fortnightly Review, May, 1900. p. 755. The value of the latter work is to show that Cowper's mental activities may be divided into two distinct periods; — first, a period of Newton's strong religious influence, second, a period of revolt from Newton, with the stream of humor free to run its course, and a saner and wider outlook upon society.

In the closing paragraph of this book, where Professor Smith almost heaps scorn upon the poets' head because Cowper's work is a flowering of Christ's ideals (what poet's is not?), the biographer would seem to

have overlooked a very simple fact. Whatever may be the outward circumstances of daily living, a reformer is no gentle spirit. Cowper's whole work in verse is a decided reaction against the lifeless classical school of his day, and it ~~is~~ should be valued highly for that alone. - ~~T~~his share in the regeneration of eighteenth century morals is no less a reality if it cannot be measured, and while the beating of Shelley's wings, and the raucous cry of Byron's Weltschmerz ~~draw us for~~ serve to stimulate our jaded spirits for a while, it is the sweet and crooning song of the quiet dweller by the Ouse and of the hermit at Rydal Mount that abides in our hearts and makes for a change in ideals, (slowly but surely). In the seclusion of his life at Olney, in the apparent indifference to the minor wants of those about him, the Life of Cowper suggests the ~~the~~ career of Immanuel Kant at Königsberg, the father of modern philosophy, & and the main-spring of all transcendental idealism.

Nor is there any derogation due Cowper because he chose to live in retirement. For each one of us, retirement from the strife of active life seems imperative for some portion of each year,

"Nor these alone prefer a life recluse,
Who seek retirement for its proper use;
The love of change that lives in every breast,
Genius and temper, and desire of rest,
Discordant motives in one centre meet,
And each inclines its votary to retreat."

– Retirement, 169-174.

* [Very appropriate lines: Retirement, 169-174.]

or for the closing years of life. It is only when we fail to observe the law of variety that we become monomaniacs.* ~~For~~ Such periods of retirement are ~~most~~ frequent, — in some cases continuous, — in the lives of creative artists. Every greater English ~~[illegible]~~ poet Milton, Tennyson, Arnold, exemplifies the statement.* And if Robert Browning be dragged in as the exception, we can only say that he has laid under cultivation a whole new field for poetry, — the mysticism of personality the religion of man per se, — which forced him to look for specimens of study among mankind in masse.

* This longing for withdrawal from the world ~~was~~ is found in the life of the race's supreme genius, Shakespeare, by whom it was fulfilled all too late.

Cowper has given us the motive for the poet's retirement in a few of his greatest lines. To parallel them with many selections from Wordsworth on the inspiration which "nature to her votary yields" would be very simple, but let us rather let us keep in mind the genuineness of this appeal; it rings so much truer than anything that we find in ~~its~~ his contemporaries; there is no invocation

to the imaginary deities of a decadent classicism; it has the idyllic touch of a second Virgil:

"To them the deep recess of dusky groves,
Or forest where the deer securely rovers,
The fall of waters and the song of birds
And hills that echo to the distant herds,
Are luxuries excelling all the glare
The world can boast, and her chief favorites share
With eager step, and carelessly arrayed,
For such a cause the poet seeks the shade:
From all he sees he catches new delight,
Pleased fancy claps her pinions at the sight;
The rising or the setting orb of day,
The clouds that flit, or slowly float away,
Nature in all the various shapes she wears,
Frowning in storms, or breathing gentle airs,
The snowy robe her wintry state assumes,
Her summer heats, her fruits, and her perfumes
All, all alike, transport the glowing bard,
Success in rhyme his glory and reward.
O Nature! whose Elysian scenes disclose
His bright perfections, at whose word they rose
Next to that Power, who formed thee and sustains,
Be thou the great inspirer of my strains.
Still, as I touch the lyre, do thou expand
Thy genuine charms, and guide an artless hand,

ement
1-210.

That I may catch a fire but rarely known,
Give useful light, though I should miss renown,
And, poring on thy page, whose every line
Bears proof of an intelligence divine,
May feel a heart enriched by what it pays,
That builds its glory on its Maker's praise."

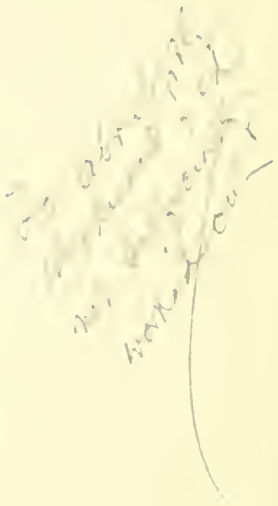
Now it is precisely on this point, — the retirement of these two poets from an active career — that I wish to dwell. Not by the citation of a line here and there, but by imbibing the spirit of Cowper's entire work, we come to feel that his withdrawal had in it an element of (~~cowardice~~ evasion); he fled from the world that he might save his own soul. To Cowper's ~~contemporaries~~ fellow-believers, this was doubtless the highest heroism, and is still so regarded in many quarters today. Let us go further, — this is a stage in the development of every self-questioning mind, — the highest point attained in the ~~second~~ first of Comte's three stages of the development of the race — the theological, the metaphysical, and the scientific. But in judging Cowper, we need to do so from a sympathetic point of view. We cannot blame him for not responding to the light which never came to him. But with Wordsworth the case is entirely different. His passivity is all the more remarkable

because it occured in a time of unusual activity. That veiled undercurrent of disparagement towards Wordsworth, manifested by a few of the critics who charge him with a lack of ~~sympathy~~ vitalizing help toward the man in the crowd, -- the active participant in the complexities of life, -- is due rather to a disregard of his methods than to a lack of appreciation of his results. There are ever two modes of bodying forth the highest truth, -- the experiential and the intuitional. In the realm of moral relationships, duty has been proclaimed from both camps. While Amos ~~is a~~ may stand as a type of the one, and Goethe of the other, Milton represents the two combined. The Prelude, its ~~purpose~~ [illegible], the letters, and his famous sonnet, all speak of the deliberateness of Wordsworth's choice. Its purpose we can only conjecture. Whether he [illegible] to trust his powers in the whirlpool of social activity, or whether he thought to compass a broader field for the benefit of mankind, let no one ~~[illegible]~~ value slightingly the greatness of the sacrifice. It touches more [illegible] than the life of any other [illegible] English poet [illegible] the Sacrifice that was Divine.

Stopford Brooke's paraphrase of Wordsworth's creed so well defines the ~~new~~ element which

entered English poetry through Cowper and Wordsworth, — viz., an intense, personal love of nature, — that I shall quote it entire: This is no intellectual admiration of the Deists, nor sentimental effusion upon external Beauty and Order. He says: "'This Presence which disturbs me with the joy of elevated thoughts, this Wisdom and Beauty, is revealing itself to me. I can listen, I can understand its voice. It is in Nature the same voice, though in a different language, which belongs to God my Father in my heart, and the work it is doing on me is a work of education. Not by reason but by feeling, not by admiration but by love, I make its lessons mine. Therefore I shall give myself wholly, when I am with Nature, to absolute self-forgetting love of her.' In that way the theology of Nature became religious, and that reacted in turn on the poetical contemplation of Nature, and made it more loving and more intense."

In part, this was the work which Cowper also helped to initiate. The student of literary development must linger lovingly on the strong ties which exist between these two great singers, who were content, each to pass.



a life-time in the quiet, modest pursuits of a retired country-life, occupied with no heavier labor than gardening, each satisfied in his own way that what he had thought and put into verse would stir the truest sentiments of his countrymen and indeed of all mankind.

K, "But wisdom is a dear with most success
381-2. Sought in still waters, and beneath clear skies".

In this small field of comparative literature, this judgment of Brooke's in 1876, was initiative as well. The study which Myra Reynolds gave to the whole treatment of nature in a broader period, published in 1896, was deeply suggestive for more intensive work, and found its general conclusions repeated in the works of Phelps and Beers.

It may be well, before progressing to a more detailed account of the similarities between Cowper and Wordsworth, to summarize the leading points, wherein, by common consent, their chief differences are to be found. [The truest evaluation of Cowper's work is by Arthur Hautsch, William Cowper, sein Naturgefühl und seine Naturdichtung. Univ. Leipzig Diss. Dresden, 1901.]

To begin on the lowest rung, — their physical organisms, — Wordsworth, with the "violent headaches" of early days, and his failing sight of

later years, seems to have been the greatest sufferer
an opinion which doubtless many would repute,
who think of that terrible mental, or spiritual
malady of Cowper's which has no parallel in
our literature - Temperament in the two poets
is another point of divergence. Cowper had a
vein of humor which even the puritanism of
Newton could not suppress, and which, after the
period of the latter's dominant influence, broke
forth into the mild but delicious satire of the "Task."
If humor be indeed the ability to sympathize
with every view of life, Wordsworth was most
grievously one-sided. Not that we would
wish him otherwise - Moral government must
be ~~the~~ insistence on the one rule of life. And
Wordsworth, taken at his own estimate, must hold
his place as a great moral teacher.

Cowper will appeal more readily to the
man of average intelligence and ordinary experience
and will be understood with much less effort on the reader's part. "The Task" is the
one poem of the language that is truly
no task to read. A reading of Cowper is the
ideal course for any class of students who
hope to enjoy the subtler thought and finer
beauty of Wordsworth. There is an historical
and natural sequence between the two.

I cannot agree with Hautsche, p. 27, that Cowper's tendency to reflection unfitted him for great work in the lyric. Wordsworth is infinitely more reflective and far more lyric. It is a misconception of lyricism to treat it as the expression of the love passion alone else Burns would be, as Hautsche says, the leader in the era of the modern English lyric, and Wordsworth, under the same judgment, would have no rank at all. In lyric poetry, one gives vent to his personal emotions, his joys and sorrows, his pains and cares, his aspiration and despair. 'My heart leaps up' is no less a lyric than 'My love's like a red, red rose', though the first springs from a peculiar but inspiring view of nature, while the second chants a youthful affection for a beautiful lass. The idiosyncracies of Shelley's deepest reflection are fused by the intensity of his emotion into unsurpassable lyrics. Cowper was less lyric, but it was because his nature combined in a less degree, the elements which make up the transcendent genius of a poet.

In the region of philosophy and religion, it is almost futile to attempt any

statement of their differences, in as much as Wordsworth fairly defies classification. The seeming uselessness of such attempts I have before pointed out. When four or five different systems of thought may be discovered in Wordsworth's work, - each form, as it were, the incarnation of a system - we may be compelled to accept Arnold's dictum that "his poetry is the reality, his philosophy, so far, at least, as it may put on the form and habit of a scientific system of thought, - is the illusion."* Cowper was thoroughly deistic in his conception of God, as Creator, or rather Artificer and Controller, but he also possessed the intense terror of the current Methodism. Concerning Science, and her future influence on the development of the race, the two poets differ in this way: Cowper, living apart from human activities, beholding with much keener insight the miseries rather than the blessings which Science had brought to civilization, tried to withdraw himself from all worldly pleasure, and, with a satire born of his Deistic principles, scorns the littleness of Man's intellect and its products. Wordsworth, too, saw Man cast into the same perplexities, ~~Cf. Task III 335-339~~ but attributed it to the breaking of that bond of union, ordained by God,

* Arnold: Wordsworth. XLX

between Man and Nature.

"Full often too
Our wayward intellect, the more we learn
Of nature, overlooks her Author more,
From instrumental causes proud to draw
Conclusions retrograde, and mad mistake."

– Task. III., 235 – 239.

"Sages who in their prescience would control
All accidents, and to the very road
Which they have fashioned would confine us down
Like engines; when will their presumption learn,
That in the unreasoning progress of the world
A wiser spirit is at work for us,
A better eye than theirs, most prodigal
Of blessings, and most studious of our good,
Even in what seemed our most unfruitful hours?"

– Prelude V; 355 – 363.

The passage cited above from the "Task", is typical of the pervading spirit of Cowper's work, but in one small extract which receives no further expansion, he sounds the note which is struck in the Prelude alone, and which is no less typical of the entire spirit of

"God never meant that man should scale the heaven
By strides of human wisdom, in His works,
Though wondrous, he commands us in His word
To seek him rather where His mercy shines."

III, 221-4.

For that ~~momentous~~ movement in English literature, so momentous in all its aspects, which we term "the return to nature," begun by ~~Thomson~~ Cowper and finding full expression in Wordsworth, as Miss Reynolds has so admirably shown, the commonest formula which sums up the movement is this: that the poet must write with his eye on the object. In more than one instance, as further comparisons will show, Wordsworth seems to have written with his eye fixed very clearly on Cowper's life and work. The one indispensable factor in ~~all~~ the efforts of all the great nature poets, - the base without which none of their results could be ~~achieved~~ reared, is the faculty of an acute perception. The senses of sight, sound, and touch were liberally bestowed upon Wordsworth at birth and developed, through environment and training, to as high, possibly a higher, degree than that possessed by any of our poets. If Thomson gave evidence of having such a sharpened faculty, he was altogether too much occupied with ~~the~~ large masses in Nature to observe the delicate differences in her forms. Cowper was one of the first to show in his works this close attention to minutiæ as the following extract proves:

"No tree in all the grove but has its charms,
Though each its hue peculiar: paler some,
And of a warmish grey; the willow such,
And poplar that with silver lines his leaf,
And ash far stretching his umbrageous arm;
Of deeper green the elm; and deeper still,
Lord of the woods, the long-surviving oak.
Some glossy-leaved, and shining in the sun,
The maple, and the beech of oily nuts
Prolific, and the lime at dewy eve
Diffusing odours: nor unnoted pass
The sycamore, capricious in attire,
Now green, now tawny, and ere autumn yet
Have changed the woods, in scarlet honours bright"
— Task I, 307-320.

In the care-free delights of boyhood, the two poets have left us records which are unique in literary history. Cowper was ~~among~~ the first to give us such an account of his rambling and hunger in the woods, and has the boldness to assert

"scenes that soothed
Or charmed me young, no longer young, I find
Still soothing and of power to charm me still"

Task. I, 141-3.

That entire memorable passage from "The Task", Bk. I. 109-149, finds a ready appreciation on the part of many a man who recalls

the early days of delight when he roamed the woods, consumed his "slice of pocket store," and warded off the pangs of hunger with apples, and berries, and nuts. The indomitable spirit of youth returns for a season and he delights to know what a strong physical basis there was, at least in early life, for the moral wisdom to which the poet gave utterance in mature life. There was nothing hypochondriacal about the boyhood of Cowper or Wordsworth; the poetic use of life's early experiences was a thoroughly new departure in Cowper's day, and clearly exemplifies the injection of the "ego" into our relations with Nature, for which Hantsche justly assigns credit to Cowper; as the first modern nature writer, in distinction from Thomson, who led merely the return to Nature. This autobiographic work was carried to consummate excellence by Wordsworth, and is interpenetrated with flashes of the Universal Spirit which, forever to his penetrating vision, "subsists in all things."

Cf. Task I, 109-149. and
Prelude I, 357-400; 430-463
" II. 301-310.
The boyhood of the Wanderer, Excursion I, 118-131; 185-218, is no less surely based on his own youth.

In the choice of Milton as their model, and in rejection of eighteenth century poetry ~~and their immediate predecessors, Cow~~ the two poets may be closely associated. [illegible] Cowper exclaims:

"The nightingale, the blackbird, clear and strong
Are musical enough in Thomson's song;
And Cobham's groves, and Windsor's green retreats,
When Pope describes them, have a thousand sweets;
He likes the country, but in truth must own,
Most likes it when he studies it in town."

— Retirement, 569-574.

must have given courage to Wordsworth to lead a great reform in English poetry, after he had tasted of the insipidities of the very leaders of a decadent classicism and of all the little versifiers. "Cowper was the spiritual son of Milton and
sche. became the spiritual father of Wordsworth."
6 Let us follow the clear-cut acknowledgments which the two men make to the worth and influence of Milton.

"Then Milton had indeed a poet's charms:
New to my taste, his Paradise surpassed
The struggling efforts of my boyish tongue
To speak its excellence; I danced for joy.
I marvelled much that, at so ripe an age
As twice seven years, his beauties had then first

Enjoyed [illegible] and wandering still,
[illegible]
[illegible] not because not [illegible]."

— Prel. II, [illegible]

With the Wanderer it was thus:

"So passed the time; yet to the nearest town
He duly went with what small overplus
His earnings might supply, and brought away
The book that most had tempted his desires
While at the stall he read. Among the hills
He gazed upon that mighty orb of song,
The divine Milton."

— Excursion I. 244–25[illegible]

In a notable prose passage, Wordsworth pays his tribute to the masters, with the supreme self-confidence that attended him throughout life:

"When I began to give myself up to the profession of a poet for life, I was impressed with a conviction, that there were four English poets whom I must have continually before me as examples — Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser and Milton. These I must study and equal if I could; and I need not think of the rest

Cowper, to be sure, could not break away absolutely from the classical tradition and its cherished treasure of "commonplaces". He is to be valued more for simplicity of diction; for a close observation of the phenomena of nature rather than for illuminating metaphors, but occasionally one meets with an epithet, a line, a figure, which bears the mark of a beautiful discrimination, which carries with it the indefinable Wordsworthian glow: as, "nice-fingered art" (Task I, 202); or his line concerning the gypsies:

"Loud when they beg, dumb only when they steal"
— Task I, 57..

and such a figure as this:

"The villas with which London stands begirt,
Like a swarth Indian with his belt of beads."
— Task IV, 748-50.

Another literary figure, which is well known in Latin classical writers, and which shows how much of tradition lay back of material adopted by the new school, is that of dipping the bowl for a drink. Wordsworth's reference is negative. Cowper, ~~uses it thus~~: describing Peasant's Nest, on the green-hill top, after apostrophizing the silence of the spot as

a poet's treasure, turns to the obverse of the picture:
"vain thought, the dweller in that still retreat
Dearly obtains the refuge it affords.
Its elevated site forbids the wretch
To drink sweet waters of the crystal well;
He dips his bowl into the weedy ditch,
And heavy-laden brings his beverage home,
Far-fetched and little worth:

—Task I, 237-243.

In the Excursion, the Pastor when called upon to give some account of the inhabitants of the Mountains, first directs the attention of the Wanderer, the Solitary and the Poet towards Hackett Cottage, "high on the breast of you dark mountain". This bright plot of cultivated ground, the home of Jonathan and Betty Yewdale, leads him on to say:

"But no tradition tells
That ever hermit dipped his maple dish
In the sweet spring that lurks 'mid you
green fields;
And no such visionary views belong
To those who occupy and till the ground,
High on that mountain where they long have dwelt
A wedded pair in childless solitude".

— Excursion V. 686-692.

[illegible] had told it.
[illegible] also Milton?

[illegible] Lands III, 216 [illegible] Excursion I, 493

The following example of a figure, little used in literature because of the delicacy required in handling it, gives strong evidence of Wordsworth's positive dependence upon Cowper. When the latter sort joined together his highest artistic powers with the ~~tenderest and~~ deep and tender emotion awakened by the receipt of his mother's picture, he gave us a classic on a theme which, because of its universal appeal, has been touched ~~by~~ all too rudely by many an unskilled hand. The whole poem is a brief narrative, rather an exposition, of the mother's yearning love as it found expression in her cares for a devoted child. The lines have little poetic adornment; their beauty lies in the simple dignity of narration; even the metaphor is noticeably absent; but, as a climax that shall be worthy of his subject, he introduces his last paragraph with this simile:

"Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast
(The storm all weathered and the ocean crossed)
Shoots into port at some well-havened isle,
Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,
There sits quiescent on the floods that show
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
While airs impregnated with incense play
Around her, [illegible] her streamers gay;

So thou, with sails how swift! hast reached the shore,
"Where tempests never beat nor billows roar,"
And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide
Of life long since has anchored by thy side.
— My mother's picture, 88-92.

Just when these lines, written by Cowper in 1790, came to Wordsworth's attention, we cannot say, but the figure is used to describe the Pastor's wife, as she approaches to get the travelling company, in the eighth book of the Excursion, composed between 1809 and 1813. The figure is used here with much less grandeur, it is purely descriptive, not reflective; moreover, it is carried out, to by details, to a refinement altogether different from Cowper's use, but the basis is the same in the two cases, and unusual enough to merit attention:

"— He enters — by the Lady of the place
Cordially greeted. Graceful was her port;
A lofty stature undepressed by time,
Whose visitation had not wholly spared
The finer lineaments of form and face;
So that complexion brought which prudence trusts in
And wisdom loves. — But when a stately ship
Sails in smooth weather by the placid coast
On homeward voyage, — what if wind and wave,
And hardship undergone in various climes,

Have caused her to abate the ring in pride,
And that full trim of inexperienced hope
With which she left her haven — not for this,
Should the sun strike her with the imperial breeze
Play on her streamers, fails she to assume
Brightness and toiching beauty of her own,
That charm all eyes. So bright, so fair, appeared
This goodly Matron, shining in the beams
Of unexpected pleasure. "

— Excursion VII, 500-578.

Wordsworth's sonnet, ~~the~~ on the pleasure of poetic pains, the first two lines of which are quoted from Cowper, shows very uniquely, by the manner of its development, the high regard which the greater poet paid to his predecessor.

Cf. Cowper. Task II, 285-304.

Wordsworth, sonnet: "There is a pleasure in poetic pains
Which only poets know."

Cowper speaks of the wealth of images that spring up in the poets mind, the "chase of terms" whereby to express the thought; the happy placing of the "faithful likeness" "he has pencilled off" so that it may "shine by situation." Wordsworth chooses rather to center his study on the pursuit of the one luckless word, which gives the poet no rest until it has been found. To read this sonnet is to appreciate all the labor with which W. brought forth his magic diction

When Cowper wrote:

"The common, overgrown with fern, and rough
With prickly gorse, that, shapeless and deformed,
And dangerous to the touch, has yet its bloom,
And decks itself with ornaments of gold,
Yields no unpleasing ramble"

I, 526-531

he gave symbolic expression to the truth for which Wordsworth labored, — to raise into the realm of art the everyday scenes, the dull facts, the "common" people of life. Cowper's part in the reformation of taste was to present the average joys and sorrows of daily life; he is, according to Taine, the master of "household verse." Much of the pleasure derived from reading his lines is due to the fact that we recognize his fidelity to nature and society in the common observations of ~~the~~ unpoetical men. Not that he leads us to heights of exaltation, to places we have never trod before, but, ~~that~~ with a delicacy of language ~~often times~~ often on his lips, he rouses our delight in a garden, a road, or even a chair; with the mildest of satire embedded in his sweet disposition, he stirs our laughter against the weak, but courtly Laureate, the affected preacher, the practiced lover. In Hautsche's pregnant phrase on Cowper. (p. 15), Wordsworth also "found the beautiful in the

pleasing, not in the romantic," but with a
father to unparalled Keenness of observation,
suffused by an unquenchable love for
Creation and its Creator, he found the
highest spiritual exaltation in "life's familiar
face." The extracts from Cowper's letters (Hantsch
p. 28.) show what he calls his "local attachment,"
his tender emotion toward his birth-place at
Berkhampstead, — the trees, and gate and house.
"I am in truth in the use of my pen so unac-
countably local." The flats of the Ouse, and
the unlovely cottages of Olney were dear e-
nough to call forth enduring poetry. On this
point of similarity between the two poets one
need hardly ~~stop~~ linger. The Lake District
of England has been almost sanctified to the
hearts of Wordsworth's readers. — ~~and~~ Helvellyn
and the Duddon, Nab-Scar and Esthwaite, are
hallowed spots in the Paradise of Wordsworth's song.

Wordsworth's well-known practice of out-
door composition (both oral and written) is
~~reflected in~~ recalled in this citation from one of
Cowper's letters: "For when I committed these
lines to the back of your letter, I was rambling
at a considerable distance from home, I set one
foot on a mole-hill, placed my hat with the crown
upward on my knee, laid your letter upon it

and with a pencil wrote the fragment. In the same posture I have written many a passage."

Wordsworth's note to the memorable poem "Lines Composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey" in which he speaks of the intense joy that its composition gave him, and how that not a line was written until after his walk from Tintern to Bristol, — this gem of one hundred and sixty lines, — gives the reader a faint suggestion of the poet's wonderfully retentive memory. It would seem that these two interpreters of Nature had some hidden, instinctive relationship with the soil beneath their feet. We have been told too frequently that Wordsworth's book was Nature, that he read comparatively little, yet one aim of this study has been to show his debt, partly unconscious no doubt, to some who preceded him. We find few literal borrowings, but many resemblances; was it not, through the possession of this memory, most active when engaged outdoors, that he acquired a vast store of poetic material? Hear, then, Cowper's words concerning this exceptional gift: "I have, though not good a memory in general, yet a good local memory, and can recollect, by the help of a tree or a stile, what you said at that particular spot. For this reason I purpose, when

the summer is come, to walk with a book in my pocket; what I read at my fireside I forget; but what I read under a hedge or at the side of a pond, that hedge and that pond will always bring to my remembrance."

The peaceful mountain, or hill-side cottage, "far remote from such unpleasing sounds as haunt the ear in village or in town", is first described by Cowper with a new sense of realism. This Peasant's Nest is set before the reader with a few bold strokes. The pleasure of making one's abode in such a place is ~~so~~ well expressed:

"Here, I have said, at least I should possess
The poet's treasure, silence, and indulge
The dreams of fancy, tranquil and secure."

But Cowper ~~can~~ not shut his eyes to the miseries of isolation,

"If solitude makes scant the means of life,
Society for me! – Thou seeming sweet,
Be still a pleasing object in my view,
My visit still, but never mine abode."

Wordsworth has made notable use of the cottage in the Excursion: (1) a description of Margaret's ruined home (Bk. I, 713-719); (2) brief mention of the Solitary's home (Bk. II, 638-643); (3) a passing glance at [illegible] Margaret's Cottage, (Bk. V, 642-644) (4) detailed account of Hackett's Cottage and its inhab-

itants (Bk. V, 673-713). Wordsworth's treatment in each case is individual; but for Cowper to set up such a standard of taste meant much for a wider acceptance of Wordsworth's work than might otherwise have been the case.

In the charming presentation of familiar scenes and common occupations, Wordsworth was deeply indebted to the masters in that province which Cowper gained. It is significant that Wordsworth's intense love of human nature, which made him, as Mr. Aubrey de Vere teaches us, see minutely the part of deep passion, was excited chiefly by his observation of the Highland shepherds. This manly acknowledgment of the impress made upon his nature, as told in the Prelude, VIII, 249-339, is preceded by a striking picture of the shepherd and his dog, as they move from place to place, (223-248); and such a picture a good companion piece is Cowper's "Morning Winter Walk" from Book V, of the "Task." (1-121). To borrow the poet's own words:

"Scenes must be beautiful which, daily viewed,
Please daily, and whose novelty survives
Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years:
Praise justly due to those that I describe."

—Task I, 177-180.

This one passage (below) lies exemplify-
the beauty which the genius of Wordsworth
could extract from the commonplaces of
life, show the uniqueness of his power, and
~~show~~ the merit of writing true to nature:
"Here 'tis the shepherd's task the winter long.
To wait upon the storms: of these approach
Sagacious, into sheltering coves he drives
his flock, and thither from the homestead bears
A toilsome burden up the craggy ways,
And deals it out their regular nourishment
strewn on the frozen ~~s~~now. And when the spring
~~Looks~~ looks out, and all the pastures dance with lambs,
And when the flock, with warmer weather, climbs
Higher and higher, him his voice leads
To watch their goings, whatsoever track
The wanderers choose. For this he quits his home
At day-spring, and no sooner doth the sun
Begin to strike him with a fire-like heat,
Than he lies down upon some shining rock,
And breakfasts with his dog. When they have stolen,
As is their wont, a pittance from street time,
For rest not needed or exchange of love,
Then from his couch he starts; and now his feet
Crush out a livelier fragrance from the flowers
Of lowly-thyme, by nature's skill enwrought
In the wild turf; the lingering dews of morn

Stalk round him, as from hill to hill he hies,
His staff protending like a hunter's spear,
Or by its aid leaping from crag to crag,
And o'er the brawling beds of unbridged streams."

~~I~~ Prelude VIII, 223-245

Cowper's dependence upon a transfigured realism is so absolute that he does not hesitate to open the fifth book of "The Task" with a description of the comic silhouettes of his own shadow on the plastered wall of the cottage; the more striking lines of this passage, however, are the following.

"The cattle mourn in corners where the fence
Screens them, and seem half-petrified to sleep
In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait
Their wonted fodder, not like hungering man,
Fretful if unsupplied, but silent, meek,
And patient of the slow-paced swain's delay.
He from the stack carves out the accustomed load,
Deep plunging, and again deep-plunging oft,
His broad keen knife into the solid mass;
Smooth as a wall the upright remnant stands,
With such undeviating and even force
He severs it away; no needless care
Lest storms should overset the leaning pile
Deciduous, or its own unbalanced weight"

Task V, 27-40.

Then follows one of the most perfectly-cut cameos

in Cowper's work, - the woodman and his dog starting out on a winter morning; the details of the picture follow each other in such manner as to command attention and admiration, and the diction, which in this case, might, under Wordsworth's ~~theorem~~ formula, run into vulgarity, is elevated with great delicacy.

It is in such work, that our two poets are most nearly ~~as~~ equal, for while ~~they~~ these passages are not the touchstones of the highest ~~poet~~ genius, wherein Wordsworth towers above Cowper, they are, of their kind, high and enduring poetry. Another excellent example is the description of the May Queen, in Excursion, Bk. II., III 137. In the fourth book of the Excursion, two of Nature's most beautiful aspects, - rising of the moon (1058-1077.), and sunset (1295 1306), - which have formed the stock in trade for all scribblers of verse, - are treated with the freshness of Wordsworth's best manner. But, if we desire to see how the depths of Wordsworth's mind were stirred by a very common experience, let us study this!

"Who doth not love to follow with his eye
The wanderings of a public way? The sight,
Familiar object as it is, hath wrought
On my imagination since the morn
Of childhood, when a disappearing line

One daily present to my eyes, that crossed
The naked summit of a far-off hill
Beyond the limits that my feet had trod,
Was like an invitation into space
Boundless, or guide into eternity."
— Prelude XIII 142-151.

It is not surprising, that, in the praise unanimously given to Wordsworth for the supremacy of his poetic genius in attempting to reconcile God and Man and Nature, we should fail to correctly judge and appreciate his position as an English patriot. Wordsworth may or may not have possessed the talent for constructive statesmanship; but the large body of his poetry devoted to the right relations of men in Society would alone give him rank among England's immortals. The two series: "Poems Dedicated to National Independence and Liberty" and "Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty and Order" — eighty-nine in all — give expression to the yearnings of the most prophetic soul which England had nursed since the light was shut from the eyes of his great exemplar — Milton.

"Here pause: the poet claims at least this praise,
That virtuous liberty hath been the scope
Of his pure song; which did not shrink from hope
In the worst moment of these evil days;
From hope, the paramount duty that Heaven lays,
For its own honour, on man's suffering heart.
Never may from our souls one truth depart —
That an accursed thing it is to gaze
On prosperous tyrants with a dazzled eye;
Nor — touched with due abhorrence of their guilt

For whose dear sake tears flow, and blood is spilt,
And justice labours in extremity —
Forget thy weakness, upon which is built,
O wretched man, the throne of tyranny!"

In his poetry here, as elsewhere, Wordsworth is universal. He sees that when he calls for the freedom of England, he must labour as well the freedom of France, and Switzerland and Spain. Slavery is the great stain on the banner of humanity which must be washed out, ~~though~~ even if it be with blood. He had a hatred as intense for the tyrant of commercial greed as for the tyrant of government. That sonnet which breathes so beautifully and quietly of nothing save pure love of country — "Fair Star of evening, Splendour of the west," — is a holy inspiration to the true citizen of every other land. His grief for the past greatness of Venice was intense because he feared for the future of his own country. Moral stagnation had set in among his countrymen; statesmen were trusting more in the strength of fleets and armies than in the spirit of the people; all these things roused his poetic genius to sublime compositions.

"The Bard — whose soul is meek as dawning day,
Yet trained to judgments righteously severe,
Firm, yet conversant with holy fear,

As recognising one Almighty sway:
He — whose experienced eye can pierce the array
Of past events; to whom, in vision clear,
The aspiring heads of future things appear,
Like mountain-tops whose mists have rolled away —
Assoiled from all encumbrance of our time,
He only, if such breathe, in strains devout
Shall comprehend this victory sublime;
Shall worthily rehearse the hideous rout,
The triumph hail, which from their peaceful clime
Angels might welcome with a choral shout!"

The "victory" was the battle of Waterloo in February, 1816, and Wordsworths earlier "Lines on the Expected Invasion" had helped to bring about the downfall of the tyrant Napoleon on foreign, and not on British soil. ~~The divine not~~ The divine right of liberty and the effective righteousness of the martyred patriot have never known a greater glory than when, in his sonnet to Toussaint L'Ouverture, Wordsworth declares:

"There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind."

In all his poetical production, Wordsworth had no ~~closer~~ model on which to draw more closely than the closing lines of "The Task" Book VI. (906-1000.)

"He is the happy man, whose life even now shows somewhat of that happier life to come"; began Cowper in that song where morality and mysticism are most effectively blended. Wordsworth recognized the ~~greatest~~ greatness of the task which the gentler poet had taken upon himself, and in the "Character of the Happy Warrior" furnishes the sublimest consolation to be found in all his writings for the man whose life has been crowded with the multitudinous demands of daily existence.

Wordsworth has very curiously interwoven within these lines the epitome of all his teaching on the divine intuitions and memories of childhood, the unrecognized but powerful and benign influence of Nature in the formation of character, and the supreme value of high moral choice as the finest expression of patriotism.

Both poems are full of utterances which make no appeal to a very large body of men in early life; it is only when the shadows thicken that they seize the poet's thought with avidity. There is ~~no~~ very much in Cowper's lines that we-

at total variance with the active and stupefied
England of his day, and much that reveals the
temper of the seer within him. To what other
leader better than to Wordsworth shall we
apply these words of Cowper's?:

"Therefore in contemplation is his bliss, earth
Whose power is such, that whom she lifts from
She makes familiar with a heaven unseen,
And shows him glories yet to be revealed.
VII. Not slothful he, though seeming unemployed,
929 And censured oft as useless."

Theory of Energy in the Prelude.

The unique position which "The Prelude" occupies among all literary confessions is ample reason for the most varied study which may be applied to it, with whatever aid psychology and religious enthusiasm may contribute toward an understanding of the poem. Perhaps even a new physical theory may be discovered between its lines.

The attempts to explain Wordsworth to readers, one generation after another, have been numerous, but not always successful. All the elements of his faith have not been explicitly worked out; critics have been content to judge the value of his philosophy by an invitation to men to subject themselves, as the poet did himself, to the free play of Nature. No adequate explanation of his Nature poetry has been written. The predominant reason for the inability to understand Wordsworth, even after readers confess their enjoyment of his work, is a prevailing ignorance of "The Prelude." I wish to show, by a few passages from this poem, that Wordsworth held, perhaps with wavering convictions, to a doctrine that Life and Mind are forms of Energy.

The frequent use he makes of the word "motion" will be recalled at once. This recognition

of the confluence of forces between what we term matter, — animate or inanimate, — and the human consciousness, is now resulting in an attempt to prove that energy is the common basis, or feeding source for both. This theory is based on the view in physics that the waves of heat, light and sound are all different types of motion, to which the sense organs have, in the process of their development, become adapted. Our sense-impressions become then the avenues (only through which motion enters the human body to be stored up as potential energy in the brain. The fear that this leads to a belief in pure mechanism is allayed by the latest exponent of the theory, who points to a purposiveness in potential energy, in that, in the present, it sums up, or includes all that it has received in the past, and looks toward its discharge in the future. The two metaphysical problems now open (1) in the field of the psycho-physical between parallelism and interactionism, and (2) in the field of the bio-physical between mechanism and vitalism, it becomes the object of this new theory to solve.

Without entertaining any defense of the theory, if a simple statement of it such as the above be kept in mind, we may understand better Wordsworth's "mysticism" in such passages as the following:

"O there is blessing in this gentle breeze,
A visitant that while it fans my cheek
Doth seem half-conscious of the joy it brings
From the green fields, and from you azure sky,
Whate'er its mission, the soft breeze can come
To none more grateful than to me."

- Book I, 1-6.

"Dear Liberty! Yet what would it avail
But for a gift that consecrates the joy?
For I, methought, while the sweet breath of heaven
Was blowing on my body, felt within
A correspondent breeze, that gently moved
With quickening virtue, but is now become
A tempest, a redundant energy,
Vexing its own creation."

Book I, 31-37.

All this great impulses, the poet received from nature, and when he entered Grasmere for the first time, and chose for his future home Dove Cottage,

"a higher power
Than Fancy gave assurance of some work

Of glory there forthwith to be begun,
Perhaps too there performed."

This "bold promise of the past" came only from the action of Nature upon him. This quantitative difference of power which separated him from all other men, this highly complex, idealizing mind, he calls "a vital soul." In his search for the theme of his poem, he discriminates finely between ambition without sufficient foundation and that overmastering power bred within him by the great forces to which he had been subjected.

Entering upon his own life-history, he tells us how the sound of the Derwent, as it flowed by his home at Cockermouth, was a music that

"composed my thoughts
To more than infant softness, giving me
Amid the fretful dwellings of mankind
A foretaste, a dim earnest, of the calm
That Nature breathes among the hills and groves."

Book I. 277-280.

He could not escape from the biological figure in discussing the development of his mind:
"Fair seed-time had my soul."

Fear, as well as delight, helped in his growth

and the superstitious dread of the child, reincarnating the early history of the race, came upon him as he ran along the open heights through half the night, plundered birds' nests and heard "low breathings coming after me."

The part that pain, coming in through sense-impressions, plays in the development of character, and the vital power of thought to readjust itself, as from the conflict of the emotions, it brings eternal peace, is summed up in one of the sublimest passages in our literature;

"Lust as we are, the immortal spirit grows
like harmony in music; there is a dark
inscrutable workmanship that reconciles
Discordant elements, makes them cling together
In one society. How strange that all
The terrors, pains, and early miseries,
Regrets, vexations, lassitudes interfused
Within my mind, should e'er have borne a part,
And that a needful part, in making up
The calm existence that is mine when I
Am worthy of myself! Praise to the end!
Thanks to the means which Nature deigned to employ;
Whether her fearless visitings, or those
That came with soft alarm, like hurtless light
Opening the peaceful clouds; or she may use

Severer interventions, ministry
More palpable, as best might suit her aim."

— Prelude I, 340–356.

There follows next an account of his boat-ride on the lake, when he felt pursued by the huge, black cliff that seemed instinct with life;

"but after I had seen
That spectacle, for many days, my brain
Worked with a dim and undetermined sense
Of unknown modes of being; o'er my thoughts
There hung a darkness, call it solitude,
Or blank desertion."

— Prelude I, 390–395.

Another strong passage which sustains the view that Wordsworth conceived Mind as a form of Motion is this:

"Wisdom and Spirit of the universe!
Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought,
That giv'st to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion, not in vain
By day or star-light thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul."

Book I, 401–407.

Here follows the section, so often referred to for its vivid truth to many a boy's experience, — the skating match on the frozen lake,

One must believe, by such lines as the following, that Wordsworth, through extraordinary powers of perception, saw the slightest exhibition of energy wherever displayed:

"Ye presences of Nature in the sky
And on the earth! Ye visions of the hills!
And Souls of lonely places! - - - -
; and thus didst make
The surface of the universal earth
With triumph and delight, with hope and fear
Work like a Sea?"

Prelude I. 464-475.

The poet offers to trace this theme, for weightier evidence, through every change of exercise in the round of the year. Nutting and fishing were sources of happiness to be equalled only by the mental tasks about the fireside at night, — games, and puzzles, and cards.

Penetrating now beyond the "forms sublime and fair" with which Nature had peopled his mind, the "joys of subtler origin" are traced to their origin in the external world. These are the strongest words he has to say of his conviction:

"Nor, sedulous as I have been to trace
How Nature by extrinsic passion first
Peopled the mind with forms sublime or fair,
And made me love them, may I here omit

How other pleasures have been mine, and joy
Of subtler origin; how I have felt,
Not seldom even in that temptuous time,
Those hallowed and pure motions of the sense
Which seem, in their simplicity, to own
An intellectual charm; that calm delight
Which, if I err not, surely must belong
To those first-born affinities that fit
Our new existence to existing things,
And, in our dawn of being, constitute
The bond of union between life and joy."

Prelude I, 544-555.

At the early age of ten, he was conscious of a joy imbibed from "silver wreaths of curling mist." This energy of mind stored up by the eye in pure contemplation, unaided by the memory, or its own reflex action, forms the substance of the next section, 367-388.

To this boy of uncommon sense-organs, of uncommon advantages for training them in school-life, there came hints of the unrecognized coalition between brain and energy:

"even then I felt
Gleams like the flashing of a shield; - the earth
And common face of Nature spake to me
Remembrable things".

Book I, 585-589.

Such joys and disciplines were so indelibly fixed in his mind that they were "by invisible links" fastened to the affections." In the closing lines, he again addresses Coleridge with an explanation for so minutely tracing these powers that he might fix the "wavering balance of my mind" for the great task lying before him.

The second book consists mainly of pure narrative;-games at Hawkshead continued until nightfall, rowing on Windemere during half-holidays in summer, frugal meals; the horse race to Furness Abbey in the Vale of Nightshade, and bowling on the green back of the tavern at the midway eastern side of the Lake.

One of the unique nature influences several times recorded by Wordsworth is the soothing effect of still water:

-"oh, then, the calm
And dead still water lay upon my mind
Even with a weight of pleasure, and the sky,
Never before so beautiful, sank down
Into my heart, and held me like a dream!"
- Book II, 170-174.

His intense love of the sun, not as the source of life, but for its beauty alone, and of the moon

as well, drew forth his human sympathies. The first doctrine of human life is the emotion of the babe, drawn in through the growing faculties of sense, chiefly from its mother; this idea is developed in lines 255 to 265.

It may now appear evident, from what is quoted above, that Wordsworth was grappling with the solution which this theory of motion presents. His analytic faculty, up to this time, laid in a strong foundations of sharp and extraordinary sense vibrations, began to trace a connection between objects which, to the ordinary mind, are independent of each other's existence. It is true that we are coming to assign some kind of conscious life to plants, but Wordsworth, in attributing feeling to inorganic nature, must, from the richness of his own perceptive experience, have exaggerated the truth. But the bond of union between Mind and Nature was established, and each was to act upon the other: "a blessing if you will call it such." At the climax of the passage 376-419, he shows that he conceives this common basis in terms of motion:

"I, at this time,
Saw blessings spread around me like a sea.
Thus while the days flew by and years passed on,

From Nature and her overflowing soul,
I had received so much that all my thoughts
Were steeped in feeling; I was only then
Contented, when with bliss ineffable
I felt the sentiment of Being spread
O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still;
O'er all that, lost beyond the reach of thought
And human knowledge, to the human eye
Invisible, yet liveth to the heart:
O'er all that leaps and runs, and shouts and sings,
Or beats the gladsome air; o'er all that glides
Beneath the wave, yea, in the wave itself,
And mighty depth of waters."

II, 394-409.

Wordsworth knew that such belief to the orthodox mind was paganism; but he, a Redeemer for Nature, shirked not the task of paying a worthy tribute to that which had taken the place, for him, of human friendship.

Vita.

I was born in Baltimore, September 29, 1882, and received my elementary education in the public schools of this city. In March, 1897, I was awarded a state scholarship in St John's College, Annapolis, Md., from which institution I was graduated as Bachelor of Arts, June, 1901. In January, 1901, I began teaching in the elementary schools of Baltimore, and continued in that work for four years. In October, 1905, I entered Johns Hopkins University to pursue graduate study in English, French, and philosophy. During 1906-1907 I held a University scholarship, and in 1908 was elected University Fellow in English for the ensuing year, but felt compelled to resign this honor in order to accept a position as instructor in English in the Baltimore City College.

My required courses in English have been under Professors Bright and Brown, and Dr. Ramsay; in French, under Professors Armstrong, Ogden, and Brush; and in philosophy, under Professor Griffin; other courses under Professors Bloomfield and Woods. To Professor James W. Bright I am indebted for guidance in work and inspiration in [illegible]

Andrew Hoffman Kerr

Date Due

MAY 27

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